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**Telling Tales Together: A Study of Children's
Collaborative Oral Story-Making and Performance**

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

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Preface

Annie McSeveney was sadly not able to complete this thesis before she passed away on 23rd August, 2010. Her near-final draft was submitted for examination, together with a statement from her supervisor. The two independent examiners agreed that her work merited the aegrotat degree of Doctorate of Education. They commented on the richness of the narrative data, the strong linking of theory and practice and the critical scholarly style of the writing. The thesis makes a significant contribution to the theory and practice of storytelling in education.

Because of the unfinished nature of the thesis Chapter 6 is in preliminary note form and the conclusion for Chapter 3 is missing. A number of references are incomplete in the thesis and are completed below:

Bottigheimer, R.B. (2009) *Fairy Tales: a new history*. New York, State University of New York Press.

Smith, D. (2010) 'Storytelling Scotland'

<http://www.friendsofscotland.gov.uk/scotlandnow/issue-05/history/storytelling.html>

Swann, J. (2009) 'Stories in Performance' in J. Maybin and N. Watson (eds) *Children's Literature: approaches and territories*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Killick, S. and Thomas, T. (2007) *Telling tales: storytelling as emotional literacy*. Educational Printing Services.

Zipes, J. (2006) *Why Tairy Tales stick*. London, Routledge.

Abstract

Telling Tales Together: A study of Children's Collaborative Oral Story-Making and Performance

This study is of relevance to primary teachers, teacher educators and librarians interested in developing storytelling with children. It sets out to establish the key skills involved in the process of children's collaborative creation of stories and in their collaborative performance of these stories for and audience. Children's collaborative story-making and telling was studied in two Scottish primary schools. In one school the context was an after-school storytelling club for children in Primary 3 and 4. In the other school, the context was a series of class storytelling sessions with a composite P5-7 class.

The research indicates that development of the skills involved in children's collaborative story-making and storytelling are dependent on their previous experience and are also complex and interdependent. It indicates that these skills include: the collaborative skills of creating, understanding and applying ground rules, of turn taking, listening and building on previous contributions; the social skills of interacting with peers and with an audience; the learning skills of memorising and of evaluating their own and others' performances; the linguistic skills of creating a narrative with structure and themes which satisfy an audience, of recognising and using different types of talk in different contexts and of borrowing language appropriately from other contexts; the performance skills of performing a narrative that satisfies an audience, of use of voice and of interaction with an audience.

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Chapter One

Focus and context for the research

1.1 Focus

My interest in oral storytelling goes back to my experiences as a parent, of telling stories in a pre-school playgroup and my first years of primary teaching. In these contexts I discovered the power of the story that is told without the book, the story that grows and changes with the needs of its listeners, the story that is told 'eye to eye, mind to mind and heart to heart', in the words of the Scottish Traveller proverb.

The present study has developed directly from my appreciation of that power and from my desire to share story-telling experiences with the children I teach. Research questions were originally focused around my role as a teacher and were concerned with what a teacher could do to further the development of the skills of collaborative oral story-making. In earlier M Ed studies (2003, 2005), I had explored the work of Mercer et al (1995, 1999, 2000, 2007) on types of talk. Mercer identified three types of talk: disputational, cumulative and exploratory and he considers that exploratory talk is the most valuable for learning. He therefore developed strategies for encouraging this type of talk in classrooms. One strategy which I found particularly useful in my professional practice was that of developing ground rules with children. This approach seemed to be very useful in developing children's ability to use exploratory talk and to discuss rational-logical issues. However, my 2005 study suggested that Mercer's exploratory talk might not be the only type of talk used in successful collaborative talk directed towards a creative activity such as storytelling.

Early in my work on the current study I had hoped to discover strategies that could be used by teachers to develop collaborative talk in a creative activity such as story-making. However, as the study continued I realised that, before I could successfully identify strategies for teachers, I needed to identify and understand the various skills that are involved for children in collaborative story-creating and performance. I also needed to get a sense of the skills that

children would need to possess or to develop in order to become successful storytellers.

In order to develop my understanding of these skills, the research questions were re-formulated as:

1. What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?
2. What skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?

1.2 Background

The focus reflects the coming together of a number of threads in my professional development, including that early interest in oral storytelling. Through my M Ed studies I developed an interest in language and literacy studies and began to question the universal value of school-based literacy, realising that this might indeed be simply 'one of the enduring myths of the western world' (Carrington and Luke, 2003:87). I felt that I should be introducing pupils to a wide range of 'literacy practices' (written and spoken) (Street 2003) and that I ought to consider the value of these practices for my pupils' future lives. Experience taught me that adults engage in talking and listening activities regularly and that skills in these areas are highly important for work and social life. At the end of the twentieth century, talking and listening seemed to be the neglected aspects of English Language learning and teaching. Mercer (1995:114) notes that 'talk amongst learners has tended to have low status in formal education.' Alexander (2008:18) refers to the 'sad history of official initiatives in the domain of talk' and mentions the 'all too brief influence of the National Oracy Project between 1987 and 1993' (2008:17). In Scottish primary schools in the 1990s, talking and listening were apparently given equal weighting with reading and writing in 5-14 English Language Guidelines (1991). These

'attach a high priority to giving pupils a command of the English language and the ability to use it appropriately and concisely to convey meanings. This includes having a knowledge about language; listening attentively; talking to the point; reading with understanding; and writing fluently and legibly with accurate spelling and punctuation' (1991: online)

However, the reality was that, while schools reflected on and worked hard to improve their teaching of reading and writing, most Scottish primary schools seemed to be content to 'deliver' talking and listening through off-the-shelf packages, recommended or provided by their local authority. Some of these did little more to develop taking and listening than allowing the school to say to HMIE that they were teaching 'listening carefully' and 'talking to the point.' (1991: online)

In 2010 these approaches to talking and listening are still common, as they are in other curricular areas. Reeves, speaking at a conference of Chartered Teachers in Glasgow, 2006, discussed the persistence of the use of publisher-produced resources in schools. She suggested that in many schools there seems to be a blind faith that all good things arrive from afar in neat packages, a belief which she related to the reported 'cargo cults' of colonised peoples (Worsley, 1988).

Towards the end of the twentieth century, new approaches were being developed to teaching other curricular areas, for example the Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education (CASE) approach developed by Adey et al(1994, 2003) The CASE approach aimed to develop pupils' thinking skills as well as their scientific understanding. It challenged pupils by introducing cognitive dissonance and encouraged them to talk together in groups in order to socially construct their own knowledge. Vygotsky's ideas were discussed during practical in-service courses for teachers. However, pupils who had been encouraged throughout their school careers to sit and listen, to work individually and not copy from others, did not always find it easy to discuss with each other or to work collaboratively in groups. The off-the-shelf packages did not teach the talking and listening skills that children

needed for collaborative group work. For example, *Oracy*, (Burgess, 1988) a popular resource, contains some group discussion activities but does not offer any support as to how these group discussions can be facilitated. I was keen to explore alternatives. An approach that I found particularly useful was that of Mercer et al (1995, 1999, 2000, 2002) In particular I found it helpful to develop ground rules for talking and listening with the children and to encourage children to make use of techniques of exploratory talk, such as asking other's opinions and asking for reasons (Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999) In 2003, as part of an M Ed, I undertook a small-scale study to evaluate the use of this approach with my class, finding that children were benefiting from their improved skills in collaborative talk across a range of curricular areas.

By 2004 I was regularly making use of Mercer's approach to collaborative group talk with classes. I continued to develop my interest in talking and listening and had the opportunity to attend an in-service course on oral storytelling. I was enthusiastic about introducing oral storytelling to my P4 class. I began to think about the universal appeal of narrative. Because of my interest in collaborative group talk, I moved from telling stories *for* children towards activities where the children were telling stories themselves. The next step was for children to create their own collaborative stories. In 2005, in the final year of an M Ed, I undertook a small-scale study of the processes of creating these stories, seeking to identify Mercer's categories of cumulative, disputational and exploratory talk in the children's creative story-making. I was surprised to discover that Mercer's categories of cumulative and disputational talk, which I had previously considered to be less useful than exploratory talk for developing ideas in, say a science lesson, were in fact being used productively by my pupils in their creative story-making and were leading to the creation of successful stories.

Both disputational and cumulative talk occurred regularly as children expressed ideas and interacted together to produce their stories. An interesting example of the productive use of cumulative talk in creative story-making is provided by Rachel, one of the children taking part in these collaborative story-telling activities. (All names of individuals in this study are

pseudonyms, to preserve anonymity and protect confidentiality.) Rachel experienced a number of barriers to learning, among these being dyspraxia. Writing was difficult and time-consuming for her and story-writing was a chore. When speaking, Rachel frequently struggled with excessive saliva. This meant that her talk did not flow evenly. Rachel was keen to participate in group and class talking and listening activities, but became frustrated easily. In group discussion activities designed to encourage exploratory talk, it was difficult for Rachel to contribute effectively. However in collaborative story-making and story-telling, Rachel had the support of peers. Cumulative talk offered security and helped her to develop her ideas. It gave her confidence. She became comfortable with others taking over when she was experiencing difficulties. In the context of a collaborative group Rachel developed her skills as a story-teller. When story-telling Rachel's face was animated and her eyes were bright. The uneven flow of her speech led to her developing a sense of timing, because when she paused, her audience waited expectantly for her next words. Rachel became recognised as one of the best story-tellers in the class. She developed skills that she could use for the rest of her life and she developed confidence in her own ability to learn. Reflecting on the impact of collaborative story-telling for Rachel and for other children made me keen to develop understanding of the processes involved in collaborative story-telling.

1.3 Rationale

As a practitioner-researcher, the driving reason for pursuing this research study was to learn more about the benefits for my pupils of oral story-telling activities. A recent study of accomplished teaching (McMahon, Reeves et al, 2010) points out the value to experienced teachers of studying the processes of learning and this study investigates such processes. Although my experience in the classroom taught me that oral storytelling is enjoyed by primary school children and offers ways to develop, in particular, children's skills in language, and although a number of valuable books have been written encouraging the use of storytelling in primary schools, storytelling did not appear to me to be widely valued by primary teachers. Conversations with colleagues suggested that oral story telling by the teacher was not common and that oral storytelling by pupils was even less so. It seemed to me

worthwhile to explore some of the ways in which oral storytelling, and in particular collaborative oral storytelling, could be useful in helping children to develop the skills which are involved in collaboration, language and performance, skills which would be useful in other areas of the curriculum and in life outside school.

In this study children work together specifically on a creative product – an oral story. To understand these products and to make some attempts to evaluate them, it was useful to approach the study from a number of different perspectives: to work reflectively with the participating children; to make use of literature on narrative (e.g. Propp, 1968, Bettelheim, 1991, Toolan, 2001) to make use of the literature on storytelling as performance (e.g. Bauman, 1986, Thornborrow and Coates, 2005, Swann, 2009). It will be seen that a multidisciplinary approach has informed both the use of literature and the analysis of the data.

1.4 Context

The exploratory nature of the study and the need for in-depth analysis of small amounts of data lead to these questions being addressed using qualitative case-study methods. A collaborative group work approach was used to develop children's skills in oral storytelling. Children worked together in small groups, to create their stories, generally with no direct input from an adult. Data was collected in different contexts. These were in two contrasting primary schools. The first was a medium-sized primary school (approximately 160 pupils) in a small town with high levels of social housing. This school will be referred to as 'Dale Primary School'. In this school, data was collected at an after-school story-telling club. The after-school storytelling club in Dale Primary School involved six Primary 3 and 4 children (aged 7-8) Data was collected from the seven 75 minute sessions of the Dale School storytelling club, plus performances for audiences outwith these club sessions.

The second school was a small primary school (54 pupils) in a relatively affluent rural area. This school will be referred to as 'Hillside Primary School'. In this school, data was collected during class sessions with two multi-

composite classes. Data was collected from three class storytelling sessions with a composite P5-7 class in Hillside Primary School (where children's ages ranged from 9 to 12.) The third of these sessions involved a performance for a younger class (where children's ages ranged from 5-6). A small amount of data was also collected from one class storytelling session with the composite P3-4 class in Hillside School (where children's ages ranged from 8-9). These two different school contexts provided contrasts, particularly in relation to the ease with which pupils were able to learn skills of collaborative storytelling, so they were extremely useful in addressing the research questions. (See Chapter Three for a fuller discussion of these issues.)

Data consisted mainly of transcribed audio recordings and research notes. These were mainly centred around the storytelling sessions with the after-school club and the classes. Research notes included my reflections as a practitioner on the storytelling sessions and my reflections as a researcher on the ways in which the data answered the emerging research questions. There was also a small amount of data in the form of photographs, video, children's drawing, writing and activities using post-it notes. I also conducted interviews with the head teachers of the two schools, to establish how they considered that oral story-telling fitted into the curriculum and what skills they considered were being developed by the oral storytelling activities. At this time both schools were following Scottish 5-14 Guidelines on English Language, as the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence was at an early stage of development and was not yet being implemented in the two schools. With hindsight, it would have been useful to discuss the value of story-telling in these schools in relation to developing the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors). (A Curriculum for Excellence, online).

In developing the analysis of this data, it became apparent that overlapping and inter-related skills were emerging. In considering these skills, it was useful to separate the analysis of the process of collaborative story-making from the analysis of the oral stories and also their performance by the children (story performance). Story performances consisted largely of informal story-

telling to the rest of the group but also involved prepared performances for audiences of children and/or family and friends. My study seeks to identify skills involved in the product – the collaborative oral stories told by children – as well as in the processes of collaborative group work by which these stories were created. For this reason the analysis draws on literature from more than one area of study. Discussion of the analysis of the process and the product of collaborative story-making is developed in Chapter Four and Five, respectively. Seven stories were chosen for close analysis and the same stories are analysed in Chapter Four as collaborative story-making and in Chapter Five as narratives and as performances.

These two different school contexts provided contrasts, particularly in relation to the ease with which pupils were able to learn skills of collaborative storytelling, so they were extremely useful in addressing the research questions. (See Chapter Three for a fuller discussion of these issues.) It was also possible to observe change over time, particularly in the Dale school storytelling club). However, in each context children were able, with support, to work together to establish ground rules for collaborative storytelling. They listened to stories and participated in collaborative story-making and story performance activities. They discussed and evaluated their own emergent skills as oral storytellers.

1.5 Structure

Following this chapter on the Focus and Context of the Research, Chapter Two engages with relevant literature, first considering theoretical underpinnings to the research, then looking at previous studies on children's story-making, cultural aspects of children's storytelling and children's legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice of storytelling. This leads to discussion of some aspects of the relationship between creativity and language, of collaborative learning and collaborative talk and of the role of storytelling in primary education. Finally, Chapter Two looks at the nature of narrative, at story performance and at some of the skills identified by adult storytellers. Chapter Three deals with methodological issues and with the methods used. It considers the philosophical

underpinnings of the methodology, ethical issues related to research with children, the implications of a case study approach, insider-outsider issues, the trustworthiness and potential generalisability of the findings of this study. Chapter Three also outlines the methods used in the study, considering the research contexts, the collection of data, the nature of that data, an account of the data chosen for analysis and the methods of analysis. Chapter Four presents an analytical discussion of the findings focusing on analysis of the process of collaborative story-making engaged in by the children. Chapter Five presents an analytical discussion of the findings focusing on the analysis of the collaborative stories in terms of both narrative and performance. Chapter Six reviews the overall research process, considers the findings of the analysis, discusses the implications of these findings for policy and practice in primary education and suggests possible directions for future research which arise from discussion of the findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and theoretical underpinnings

In order to consider the research questions ‘What skills are involved in the process of creating oral collaborative stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?’ and ‘What skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?’, I shall draw on literature from a variety of disciplines, for example, in considering the first research question, discussions of theories of learning, situated learning and collaborative learning draw on writing from the field of education, while considerations of types of talk draw on language studies and linguistics. In considering the second research question, insights were identified from studies of creativity and also from work on narrative, performance and oral storytelling.

The theoretical underpinnings of the study, derived from post-structuralist writings and sociocultural theory, will be considered first, followed in section 2.2 by a review of seminal work by Fox and Dyson on story-making by children. A discussion of socially situated learning and children’s legitimate peripheral participation in creative communities of practice follows in section 2.3. This leads, in section 2.4, to an account of language and creativity and a consideration of the extent to which they are relevant to the research questions. Section 2.5 is an account of some aspects of collaborative learning and collaborative talk, which is followed, in section 2.6. by a discussion of oral storytelling in primary education in Britain. The subsequent sections offer insights into the second research question. They are: 2.7, the nature of narrative and 2.8, storytelling and performance skills. In the Conclusions section, 2.9, I will indicate how the literature informed my research design and the analysis of data that is discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

This study is underpinned by theories of social constructivism, the understanding that learning and what we understand as reality or truth are

constructed through interaction with others. For Berger and Luckman, humans are

biologically predestined to construct and to inhabit a world with others.
(Berger and Luckman 1967:204)

Berger and Luckman consider that, once constructed,

'this world becomes ... the dominant and definite reality. (Berger and Luckman 1967:204)

The socially constructed worlds of 21st century children will contain ways of making sense of the world that are part of the dominant and definite reality of the adults around them, a reality which may be partly shaped by ideology, science or other elements. Their worlds will also contain elements derived from their peers and from the popular culture which surrounds them. Berger and Luckman's (1967) understanding of the world as socially constructed has implications for the way that we teach. If knowledge is socially constructed, and schools are seen as institutions where children gain knowledge, then schools can, and arguably should, be places where children are given regular opportunities to experience this social construction of knowledge for themselves, along with their teachers.

When children learn to create and tell stories in a small group they are continually exchanging the roles of teller and listener and so gain skills in both these roles. Bruner's view that

Most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. (1986:127)

is particularly relevant to a study of collaborative storytelling. Bruner drew on the writings of Vygotsky, working in post-revolutionary Russia, but relatively unknown in the west until the 1970s. Vygotsky explained his understanding of

the development of what was later called 'social construction of knowledge' through a two stage model.

every function in the child's cultural development appears twice, on two levels. First on the social, and later on the psychological level; first *between* people as an interpsychological category and then inside the child, as an intrapsychological category. (1978:57)

This statement represents Vygotsky's understanding in the early part of the 20th century. In the present day, we might ask: How can we know that this process always occurs? Is it possible that there could be an ongoing dialectical relationship between the two levels that Vygotsky describes? In collaborative story telling activities, children experience the interpsychological level as they create a story together. However, when making her/his own contributions, for a short space of time a child will become an individual story teller, performing for a group audience and developing intrapsychological learning. These concepts are relevant to understanding the skills that are involved in the process of children creating collaborative stories.

One of Vygotsky's major contributions' to modern pedagogic theory is the concept of the zone of proximal development' or ZPD. He defines this as

the distance between the actual developmental level ... and the level of potential development 1978:87)

In a collaborative story telling context this might mean that children who have the skills to contribute to a group discussion which leads to the creation of a story, are likely to be able to develop their skills in ways which allow them to tell part of a story independently on a future occasion.

Vygotsky expresses this idea more generally as

What is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow – that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow (1978:87)

In considering the research questions, 'What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' and 'What skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD is useful in pointing up the need to recognise skills where children might require assistance and also in the implication that through discussing and recognising the skills involved in story telling, the emergent storytellers or listeners will themselves be able to move towards improved levels of future development in creating and performing oral stories.

Vygotsky presupposes that all learning will inevitably be internalised by the individual child and made available to him/ her to use independently. However we can consider the possibility that some learning might actually remain at the interpsychological level and not become available for the child to use independently, although progress through the ZPD can still be identified. For example, initially a group of children might only be able to create or perform a story with significant support from an adult, perhaps in blending the children's contributions into the adult's story. Subsequently they may be able to move through their ZPD to a new level of understanding and skill where they can create or perform a similar story as a member of a peer group without adult help. They may also move into new groups and help to scaffold the learning of the new group in completing a similar task. However, this progress may still not lead to an individual child being able to tell a story independently, within the timescale of the study or indeed within the timescale of a child's school career. Nevertheless, we recognise that learning had taken place as the children have made progress from legitimate peripheral participation towards central participation (Lave and Wenger 19xx).

Language is an important tool in learning to tell stories. For Vygotsky, language, functioning as 'a means of concept formation' (1986:108), is an essential tool in all social construction of knowledge. *'Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated- with the intentions of others'* (Bakhtin, 1981:294). In creating collaborative oral stories, children continually build on previous contributions. They seem to borrow from each other, from adult role models and from popular culture. Bakhtin's image for understanding the nature of language suggests a busy community of ideas and concepts, with each utterance carrying traces and connotations from its previous contexts of use. Language is not understood as a symbol system that could exist independently of the culture which created it. It is not simply a complex system of grammar and syntax for delivering meaning, but a meaning-making system inextricably bound up with the cognitive and social processes which produce it and through which meanings are expressed. In Bakhtin's words, *'language is not an 'abstract system of normative forms, but rather a heteroglot conception of the world'* (1981:293)

For children to engage actively in this meaning-making system, not simply be the passive recipients of previously constructed knowledge, they need to be given opportunities for talking and listening to each other and opportunities to work collaboratively to co-construct their knowledge. The importance of collaborative learning was recognised in the 1970s and represented a move away from the concept of the child learning by individual investigation, a concept associated with Piaget. The opening up and translation of Vygotsky's writing had a profound influence on western educationalists, leading to greater recognition of the social nature of learning.

As a result of this understanding, the value of collaborative learning has become widely recognised (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978, Bruner, 1986, Adey and Shayer, 1994, Black and William, 1998, Mercer, 1995, Mercer et al, 1999, Corden, 2000, Joiner et al, 2000, Mercer, 2000, Naylor and Keogh, 2000, Black et al, 2002, Adey et al, 2003, Gee, 2004, Mercer and Littleton, 2007,

Alexander, 2008, Rojas-Drummond, 2008). It is a way of translating the theory of social constructivism into effective classroom practice. In Vygotsky's words

Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them.

(1978 :88)

Vygotsky's writing suggests that the social nature of human learning is wired in to the human being. His concept of the children growing into the intellectual life of their society foreshadows Lave and Wenger's concepts of situated learning and of the community of practice into which learners are initiated through legitimate peripheral participation. This apprenticeship model of learning, discussed in section 2.2, provides an account of how the social nature of human learning might operate in practice. Many educationists in the second half of the twentieth century drew on the social constructivism of Vygotsky.

2.2 Fox, Dyson and cultural dimensions of children's storytelling

Fox (1993), studying the oral stories produced by pre-school children, drew on the work of Vygotsky, in particular making use of his understanding of the concept of the zone of proximal development and the importance of imaginative play for children's learning and also of. Fox's initial sample of 10 children were selected according to the criteria that, a) they had been regularly exposed to children's literature and b) they had not yet learned to read or write. The children were between 3 and 5 years old and were growing up in 'articulate middle class families'. One of Fox's criteria in choosing the original sample was that the children 'would need to enjoy telling stories' (1993:3) so we can assume that parents considered that their children matched this criterion. We can also assume that these parents set some positive value on the practice of oral storytelling. As Fox's study proceeded it became clear that, for the purposes of the research, which set out to look for links between children's literature and their oral stories, only 5 of these pre-school children were able to produce talk which Fox could recognise as storytelling. Fox's explanation is that those who were successful in this had previous experience of adult modelling of oral storytelling. This argument is

supported by the fact that her son, Josh, produced far more stories than any of the other children. Josh had extensive experience of his father's oral storytelling.

Fox argues that 'children's literary competences are far greater than had previously been guessed at' (1993:78). Although her sample was a small number of children from middle class, book-loving backgrounds, Fox found that some of these pre-school children were able to construct oral stories which were far more complex than the written stories that they might be expected to produce in their first few years at school.

Dyson, (1996, 1997, 2003) working with older children, also drew on the work of Vygotsky, like Fox noting his views on the importance of imaginative play and also making use of his views on language in meaning making and in writing. She also draws heavily on Bakhtinian dialogic theory of language, on his concepts of voicing, borrowing and reconstituting voices. Dyson studied children's emergent writing and found that stories developed from and merged into the children's play activities. In a classroom where stories were part of normal practice, children made use of these stories and developed them, both within their unofficial activities of playground play and in the official class activities of creative writing and Author's Theatre (an approach where children write stories or scripts which are then performed by a group of their peers, directed by the author),

Dyson looks forward to a school curriculum which has space for oral storytelling and also for popular culture, a curriculum which allows the creation of fictional worlds, which participants recognise, or come to recognise, as constructed by themselves and others. She challenges the views of some 20th century teachers about what constitutes suitable fictional material for use in schools, stating that,

the historicism of folk traditions, the immediacy of popular art, and the endurance of classic productions all intermingle in our cultural conversations. (1996)

and, by implication, should therefore intermingle in our schools.

Fox and Dyson both found that storytelling activities allow children to engage in the creation of oral texts, even when they lack the skills to produce written texts. Similar findings were also noted in my 2005 M Ed study (see Chapter One) and they are of significance when considering the value of oral storytelling in primary schools. Both Fox and Dyson also found that children's spoken language can be far in advance of their ability to produce written texts and both suggest that engaging with the creation of oral stories is likely to have beneficial effects on children's later ability to produce written stories. These findings invite questions about what skills are involved in the creation and performance of oral stories and perhaps also about how these skills might be transferable to other areas of learning (see Chapter Six).

Fox found that the children in her study brought different experiences to their storytelling, for example familiarity with TV news broadcasts or the nonsense rhymes of Edward Lear, and that these shaped the stories that they told. Dyson found that the children in her studies made extensive use of their experiences of popular culture. The cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) which children bring to collaborative story-making and story performance activities is likely to have a major impact on the way that they undertake these activities and their sense of success or otherwise in the activities. This cultural capital may take the form of previous experiences of stories, either through books, through listening to oral stories or through the popular culture of the media. It may take the form of skills that they already possess, in reading and writing stories or in performance. Another aspect of the cultural capital that children bring to collaborative storytelling is their experience of and skills in collaborative group work and collaborative talk.

Both Fox and Dyson, studying children's creation of narratives in different social contexts, looked for the cultural influences on these narratives. Fox (1993) did not find that detail from heard stories has a big influence on the stories her children created themselves, although the experience of listening

to oral stories and the time spent on this seemed to be related to the children's abilities to tell oral stories themselves. This relates to the findings of my current study discussed in Chapter Four.

Fox's finding that half of her original sample of pre-school children did not produce what she recognised as stories contrasts strongly with data from the older children in my M Ed study (McSeveney, 2005) collected from 22 eight year olds who had been regularly exposed to children's literature, to infant reading schemes, book-based stories and some forms of fictional popular culture. However, the children in my 2005 study also had experience of oral story telling, both as listeners and as emergent story tellers, through my own interest in storytelling. The relationship between exposure to adult modelling of oral storytelling and the ability or lack of ability to tell stories noted by Fox is supported in the current study and also claimed by other writers on storytelling (e.g. Robertson, 2008). It would seem that experience of adult models is an important element of beginning to learn to tell stories. The significance of adult modelling of oral storytelling will be noted in Chapters Four and Five and further discussed in Chapter Six.

In Fox's study the children regularly borrow from or imitate familiar texts or even from radio news broadcasts (Fox, 1993). As Vygotsky points out, children do not necessarily understand everything that they imitate (1978:78). Through discussion with the children's parents, Fox was able to trace various influences on the stories produced, not just those of the books and oral stories they have encountered but also autobiographical details, TV, radio, films, rhymes, poems, toys, drawings, dreams. In Dyson's studies of conversations, written texts and of stories acted out by children as 'Author's Theatre', much of the 'borrowing' is acknowledged by the children and identified by Dyson and her research assistants as being from popular culture (1996.1997, 2003). She notes that the children found 'textual toys – symbolic materials used for play', (2003:40) in popular culture and that 'the meanings provided by commercial culture are not reproduced but reworked' (1997:16). In my current study, discussion of the borrowings in their stories offered children some insights into their own developing skills as creators of narratives.

The concept of borrowing draws on the work of Bakhtin (1981). Dyson's work is shaped by Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic perspective on language as a means by which individuals appropriate available societal signs, like spoken words, to situate themselves in their social worlds. The African -American children in her studies made far more use of popular culture than did the white middle-class children. However she notes that talk about popular culture was not acceptable to the teachers of all of the school classes (1996). It seems likely that the white middle-class children were aware of this and that their knowledge influenced what they considered appropriate subject-matter for classroom talk and writing.

2.3 Situated learning in creative communities of practice

Dyson's recognition of the social and cultural dimensions of children's storytelling leads to consideration of the concept of situated learning. Barton and Tusting (2005:4) note the development of the situated learning model from psychological to social. The concept draws on Vygotsky's understanding that all learning is inherently social. The concept of situated learning was further developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). Situated learning is sometimes termed 'learning through doing' and is contrasted with knowledge transfer models of learning such as learning through instruction or cognitive models of learning through developing theoretical understanding.

Lave and Wenger's 1991 work draws on the work of Scribner and Cole (1981) which suggested that a cognitive model was not the most useful one to use in understanding the development of literacy among the Vai and on Lave and Wenger's own studies of apprenticeship (1991). In traditional apprenticeships, newcomers learn through working along side old-timers and are gradually introduced to the relevant knowledge and ways of working within their craft. Apprentices would be expected to take on small tasks at the periphery of the craft work. They are not bystanders, there only to watch, but are actively involved in the craft work. For this reason Lave and Wenger describe this process of learning through initial marginal involvement as 'legitimate peripheral participation'. This concept of learning through legitimate peripheral

participation has been a significant influence on my current study, as it became clear that the children's early participation in storytelling was peripheral, sometimes marginal (Wenger, 1999:167) and that they gradually moved in the direction of fuller participation in the storytelling activities (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Oral storytelling can be considered as a craft and as an ancient craft whose traditions vary from culture to culture, although appearing to draw on common understandings across the world (Hyde, 2007, 2008). However, the concepts of situated learning and of legitimate peripheral participation have not only been used to account for the learning of a craft through apprenticeship. They can be seen to be relevant to the learning of many and varied practices within group or community contexts. Lave and Wenger developed the concept of learning through legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice, defining a community of practice as 'a set of relations among persons, activity and world' (1991:98). The concept was further developed by Wenger, (writing alone, 1999), who discussed communities of practice in terms of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, shared repertoire and negotiating meaning in practice (1999, Chapter 2).

The concept of a community of practice has been discussed and contested by a number of authors for example Eraut (2002) who makes a useful criticism of Wenger's later work by pointing out that Wenger considers communities of practice as largely static and does not consider the ways in which they can change, perhaps through the legitimate peripheral participation of newcomers who gradually become full participants. Eraut's point is relevant to the consideration of the development of children's collaborative oral storytelling in an after-school context where there is little in the way of a pre-existing body of practice into which newcomers are expected to fit.

Barton and Tusting, Barton and Hamilton, Creese, Gee and Lea also contest Wenger's concept of community of practice. They question Wenger's acceptance of the neo-liberal New Work Order and the way he ignores issues of power and control, issues which are always present in a school context or

anywhere where adults and children interact. However, the most significant criticism put forward by these authors is of Wenger's neglect of the language aspects of situated learning. Creese suggests that for much learning the speech community is a more relevant context to consider than the community of practice (2005:58). Gee proposes that the consideration of semiotic social spaces is more relevant to the study of learning through ICT. However, the concept of the community of practice remains a useful one which can throw light on the learning in my own study, as the creation and performance of oral stories involves more than speech acts and semiotics, for instance it is also relevant to consider the development of social and performance skills.

The concept of legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice, developed in Lave and Wenger's 1991 work, has become less important in Wenger's later work (1998, 2002) where community of practice is developed as a concept of team-based work practices, initiated and supported by management in developing the New Work Order. Rogoff (1990, 2003) whose anthropological work on children's learning is based on Vygotsky's theories, stresses the role of adults in providing 'guided participation' to support children's entry into a community of practice. She introduces the terms 'learning community' and 'community of learners' to discuss school practice which is based on guided participation, although she is critical of the way that these terms have been watered down in current educational discourse (2001). The concept of community of practice has also been used in other contexts to understand and justify developing educational practices. For example, Lea comments on the use of the concept to justify increased use of collaborative group work in higher education which, she claims, may in reality be a response to the need for 'faculty members to attend to increasing student numbers with dwindling resources' (2005:183). For the purposes of this study, the concept of legitimate peripheral participation is useful in understanding the situated nature of the learning that took place and the concept of the community of practice is useful in understanding my wish to support children's learning develop from peripheral to central participation within a creative community of practice where children could create and perform oral stories.

2.4 Creativity and Language

In the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, I argue that the children's learning in this study occurs through their legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice. The concept of a 'creative' community of practice needs a little more unpacking, as the concept of creativity is a contested one. Tharp, a well-known choreographer, writes about walking into an empty dance studio 'with the obligation to create a major dance piece' (2003:5). This image suggests that creativity is practised by talented individuals working in the traditionally creative fields of dance, music, art etc, yet Tharp's point is that the way she feels in this experience is common to us all and that creativity is something that is available to everyone. Craft (2001) develops the concept of 'Little c creativity', or creativity in everyday life, which she discusses in terms of active engagement in coping with life and of the use of possibility thinking. She contrasts this 'little c creativity' with 'big C Creativity' which is the mark of the genius or the person who makes significant contributions to a particular domain and which is not a concern of the current study.

Another issue in discussions of creativity, which is highlighted by the Tharp example, is that of whether creativity is domain-specific and in particular, whether it is confined to the traditional creative subjects. Eisner (2002) writes of the value of the creative arts in education and suggests that teachers should try to recreate the environment of an artist's studio in their classrooms, so that learners are encouraged to develop confidence in their own creative abilities (2002:74). Fisher (2003:161), on the other hand, suggests that creative thinking is multi-dimensional. Jeffrey and Craft (2001:8) state that many of the contributors to their book reject the arts-based interpretation of creativity, although some (e.g. Craft) suggest that discipline-based constraints can actually encourage creativity to develop. Storytelling activities may offer sufficient constraints and conventions for creativity to be fostered.

Definitions of creativity tend to cluster around concepts of active engagement, possibility thinking and novelty. Fisher (2003:160) defines creativity as a 'capacity for original ideas and action'. His definition recognises the 'potential

for creative thinking in all fields of activity, and that all have the capacity for such achievements.' Csikszentmihalyi (1996) writes of creativity as characterised by a very positive sense of 'flow', an image which suggests an almost organic process and perhaps a liberation of thought from the confines of everyday thinking. His ideas relate to creativity valuable for individual empowerment, an understanding of creativity which is relevant to education. Goodwin (2004:1), writing for teachers, suggests that creative activity involves the ability to 'think, imagine and try out new ideas.' She considers that creativity in the classroom involves both generation of new ideas and appreciation or evaluation of these ideas. Kerry, aged 10, cited in Fisher (2003:19) says 'Creativity is when you are surprised by what you do – and it works!' a definition which neatly brings in ideas of novelty, appropriateness and evaluation.

Recent writers on creativity have pointed out the social and situated aspects of creativity. Studies by Craft, (2005) Leach (2001) and others have put forward the view that creative learning is always social, always interpsychological in Vygotsky's terms and that, within communities of practice where creativity is valued, creativity will be more highly developed. This view suggests that creativity can be collaborative as well as individual and also that creative skills can be learned. Fisher (2003:161) considers that creative skills can be developed through practice and that teachers can support the development of creative skills by their 'willingness to observe, listen and work closely with' (children) 2003:17). The English National Curriculum (2000) recognises creative thinking is one of the key skills in thinking and in learning. Learning and Teaching Scotland states that 'The development of creative thinking in young people underpins two of Scotland's most important national strategies: *Curriculum for Excellence* and *Determined to Succeed*' (Itscotland).

Fisher (2004:12) considers that 'creativity is a characteristic of people... processes ... (and) products', which makes it more difficult to identify and understand. Jeffrey and Craft (20001) would add environmental factors to the areas of study of creativity. My current study considers creativity in relation to

various different aspects of story telling work with the children: the processes of collaborative oral story-making and also the products, that is, the stories and their performance.

The relationship between language and creativity is very relevant to a study of creative story-making and story performance. Language is the medium through which stories are created and performed and through which collaboration in creating and performing stories is made possible. It has been suggested that, even in everyday conversations, speakers use language in creative and innovative ways (e.g. Tannen 1989, Carter 2004). Carter examined data from the CANCODE corpus of spoken language – taped and transcribed data, almost all of it being conversations between adults – and found that ordinary people in everyday conversations are immensely creative. Although the data was originally collected in order to provide examples of grammar in spoken English, Carter himself used the corpus for the new purpose of providing data for studies of everyday creativity (2004).

In this work Carter notes the way that conversationalists played with language, and clearly enjoyed this process. Carter likens this conversational play with language to poetry, noting the spontaneous use of metaphors and similes, the invention of new words, of punning and of patterning in the language. I would suggest that this play with language is also found in oral story telling, for instance in the repeated patterns of traditional British stories, such as *The Gingerbread Man*, *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. The children in Fox's study appear to play with words or phrases that appeal to them, sometimes to great effect, without necessarily being able to use these words or phrases appropriately, for example when Josh mixes words and phrases from BBC News and weather forecasts with talk about himself and his family. The opportunity to creatively play and have fun with language is one of the opportunities that oral storytelling offers to children. Carter acknowledges that we should not only consider language forms but that we should also look at contexts when we are identifying creativity in talk. In addition to the analysis of linguistic features he developed ways of categorising talk contexts, arguing that

creative language choices compel recognition of the social contexts of their production: principally, but not exclusively the maintenance of interpersonal relations and the construction of social identities. (2004:148-9)

Recognising the importance of the social contexts in which conversations were generated, Carter notes that, '*Spoken creativity is co-produced.*' (2004:111), a statement which has implications for the study of collaborative oral story-making. Carter contrasts spoken with written creativity. Most written creative work is constructed, at least in part, by individuals working alone, although, as Bakhtin points out, all language is always dialogic, being related to past utterances and potentially having an impact on future utterances.

Carter notes that some social contexts appear to be more likely to produce creative verbal play than others, a finding which has implications for this study, where the two schools offered different social contexts for the development of storytelling. Like Crystal (1998) who notes that language play serves to build relationships, Carter considers that language play can function as 'the verbal equivalent of gentle hugging'. (2004: 110).

The role of language play in relationships is likely to be an important element of the fun which pupils find in collaborative oral story telling activities. Interestingly, Carter found that verbal play was more likely to occur where social relations between participants are equal. Cook (2000) however, contradicts this, stating that verbal play is more likely to occur where the social relationships are either intimate or characterised by imbalance of power and is in fact less likely to occur where the social relationships are more equal and language is not being used 'to create the relationship' (2000:63). Perhaps there are variations in specific elements of social contexts that are not confined to issues of power.

Another aspect of the social nature of creativity lies in playing around the edges of what is considered acceptable. In Fox's study, her own son had

great fun using language which he himself labelled as 'rude' and which he would probably not have used in a school context. (Fox, 1993). The subversive fun element of this type of language use should not prevent us from seeing the learning that may be taking place here. Pearson (2010) notes the need to recognise that children are not necessarily 'acting up' when they are having fun in a creative context. Graddol et al (1994) note that, for all the fun of jokes and playful language, participants 'need to work at making sense of what's going on' (1994:201). Macaulay points out the extent of the knowledge of linguistic structure, for example of word and morphological division, phonemic principles, syntax, intonation and stress, homonyms and the conventions of writing that must be understood for the point of a joke to be grasped by a child (1996:188). Children who are moving towards that understanding, laugh at jokes that adults may find difficult to understand. Cook (200:5 and 20-21) points out the widespread appeal of subversive or random elements in language play.

Carter writes of repetition and convergence of talk between different participants and recognises that there can be a surface incoherence in the talk. He notes that coherence in talk is often interpersonal rather than topical, developing the idea that talk serves to build relationships. In Dyson's accounts of school-children's developing writing, (1996, 1997, 2003) she notes that one of the principles underlying the creation of texts was to generate sufficient characters for the writer's friends to be able to participate in performance of the work. She observed many conversations between the children which were about negotiation of these future performance roles and commented on the social and power relationships between classmates. In Chapter Four I will discuss forms of interpersonal coherence in more detail with reference to my own data.

The interpersonal aspects of children's creative use of language are reflected in their talk during collaborative story-making activities (see Appendix C and discussion in Chapter Four) where complex dialogic elements can be identified. Maybin (2006) discusses various dialogic elements in children's talk, finding evidence of subtle interweaving of utterances, each utterance

referring backwards to previous utterances and forward towards an audience (2006:23). She notes the constant ongoing process of interactive and recursive meaning-making (2006:24). She describes how she moved from a relatively static image of how different contexts influenced children's talk, to a more dynamic conception of how current and alternative contexts are reconfigured in children's talk (Maybin, 2006:6). Again we see the importance of social and interpersonal aspects of children's creation of talk and their development of creativity through talk. There is also a suggestion that Carter and Crystal's simplified interpretations of social contexts in terms of power relationships may not be the most useful. More subtle dimensions of social relationships often become very apparent during children's play and collaborative story-making and story performance are examples of creative activities which almost arise naturally from children's play. Children's imaginative play offers a context for the development of story making and story performance skills. Dyson, (1996, 1997, 2003) found that stories developed from and merged into the children's play activities and that the children's creativity was demonstrated in their collaborative play activities as well as in their written stories.

2.5 Collaborative talk

It seems likely that there would be overlaps between the skills required for creative collaborative talk in story telling and those required for collaborative talk in, say, problem-solving activities. Barnes and Todd (1977), in their classic study of children's talk in small groups, examined children's collaborative discussion in problem-solving tasks. They used two frames to analyse the talk – an interaction frame and a content frame (1977:104-5), recognising that the social interaction between participants is as relevant to understanding collaborative talk as the content of their discussion. What did they find? After more than thirty years of developing interest in the practices of collaborative learning, Joiner et al (2000) brought together research on collaborative learning reflecting socio-cultural, psychological and educational perspectives, research which considers socio-cultural issues of identity (e.g. Murphy) as well as cognitive skills approaches (e.g. Ding and Flynn, Wegerif).

As discussed in section 2.3, the socio-cultural concept of community of practice is useful in considering children's development as emergent storytellers. The children in my study learned to participate as listeners in the creative community of practice of storytelling club or class storytelling sessions. They developed their skills of story-making and story performance through this legitimate peripheral participation, moving along the spectrum of participation from legitimate peripheral participation towards full or central participation as collaborative story makers and story performers. Fox (1993) studied the stories told by individual children. She found that the pre-school children in her study were unable to tell oral stories if they had not experienced oral storytelling as a listener and that some of the children needed adult support to create their stories. For these pre-school children the relevant community of practice seemed to be within the family. In a context, where storytelling is normal practice, whether this context is in the home or in school, children are novice storytellers, developing their skills in the company of more experienced others. By participating in group story telling activities they have the opportunity to construct fictional worlds together with their peers. This involves skills which some children have learned elsewhere. For instance, Ananny, in a study of collaborative story-making using a digital toy, comments that

much fantasy and collaborative storytelling spontaneously occurs ... using language during play to describe other worlds, events and characters, (2002:2).

Oral storytelling is always social, always interactive. No story is told in exactly the same way twice, even by professional story tellers, because it depends on the interaction of teller and audience.

'It is audience and storyteller together, then, that produce a particular type of performance.' (Swann, 2009:)

In the present study, collaborative work depends on the skills of collaborative talk as children talk together in small groups to create their stories. As little (if anything) is ever written down in the story making sessions, clearly the skills

of collaborative talk and oral memory are essential to the process. Collaborative talk has been categorised in different ways. For example, Alexander lists 31 types of talk, grouping these into repertoires for everyday life, for teaching, for learning and for organisational contexts (2008:38-40). Interestingly, none of these repertoires, not even that of 'learning talk', contains a category of creative talk, which would be relevant to my study. Mercer and colleagues (1995, 1999, 2000) and Barnes (1976, 2008) have identified and studied a smaller number of types of talk. Drawing on his research into children's group talk in problem solving contexts, Mercer describes three types of talk. He terms these cumulative, disputational and exploratory talk. (Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999, Mercer, 2000, Mercer and Littlejohn, 2007, Mercer and Dawes, 2008). In Mercer's view, exploratory talk is the ideal, to be encouraged in our pupils as he believes that it is essential for the development of logical-rational thinking. Exploratory talk involves asking and answering questions, giving reasons and considering the points put forward by others in an evaluative manner, Mercer contrasts exploratory talk with cumulative talk, where participants support each other without challenging each other's points of view and with disputational talk, where participants disagree with each other's point of view without offering any supporting evidence and appear to argue for the sake of arguing.

Interestingly, the term 'exploratory talk' was earlier defined in a slightly different way. Barnes, who first used the term exploratory talk in 1976, describes an example of exploratory talk by school pupils as 'disjointed and hesitant' and containing 'broken utterances (and) changes of direction' (2008:6). Barnes' account of exploratory talk is not of the ideal of pupils discussing logically, asking each other's opinion and giving reasons but it is 'hesitant and incomplete ... part of the struggle to assign meaning' (2008:6). Barnes also considers this kind of exploratory talk useful to children's learning and to their construction of knowledge. He notes that this talk helped children in 'sorting out their thoughts' and allowed them to 'use their existing knowledge ... to construct a meaning' (2008:6) These different definitions of exploratory talk may be related to the different research contexts from which they emerged— Mercer et al looked mainly at rational-logical problem-solving

whereas the example Barnes uses comes from a discussion of literature. However the different definitions may also be related to the schema used by each of these researchers to categorise and contrast different types of talk. While Mercer et al contrast exploratory talk with two other (in their view, less successful) types of talk that occur in small group discussion, Barnes contrasts exploratory talk with presentational talk, talk where 'the speaker's attention is primarily focused on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of the audience' (2008:6-7). He sees this type of talk as also valuable for pupils, because being aware of the needs of the listeners is an essential part of mature communication. Skills of presentational talk are particularly relevant to the performance of the oral story, where communication with the audience is vital.

As discussed in Chapter Four, which looks at the process of collaborative story-making, Mercer's categories of talk provided a useful starting point for analysis, although they seem to fit less readily into discussions of creative talk in story making and story performance than into discussion of rational-logical problem-solving activities. In Chapter Five, which looks at the children's stories as performance, it was more useful to follow Barnes in contrasting exploratory with presentational talk. In developing the analysis of talk in this study, I have found it useful to consider the categories of talk proposed by both Mercer and Barnes, but, like Alexander's 31 types of talk, neither Mercer or Barnes' ways of categorising talk seemed to deal adequately with creative talk in story making and story performance. Rojas-Drummond et al (2008) and Pearson (2010) similarly noted the limitations of Mercer's categories in understanding creative talk.

2.6 Storytelling and primary education

While the benefits of collaborative learning have become widely recognised since Barnes and Todd's 1977 study, the benefits of collaborative oral story telling in schools have received relatively little attention. The universal nature of oral storytelling has perhaps contributed to its being devalued in our education systems, which traditionally value written literacy practices, practices which are more difficult to acquire and which are assessable by

formal methods. Perhaps because the skills of talking and listening are first learned within the context of the family, without the need for professional input, these skills have been undervalued by professional educators. However, in recent years there has been an increasing interest in the use of oral story telling in primary schools, in spite of the prescriptive demands of the National Curriculum and the Literacy Hour in England and the less prescriptive but still highly influential 5-14 Guidelines in Scotland. A reflection of that developing interest is the appearance of a number of books recommending the use of oral storytelling in primary classes, in both the UK and the US (e.g. Howe and Johnson, 1992, MacDonald, 1993, Rubright, 1996, Grainger, 1997, Grugeon and Gardner, 2000, Mellon, 2000, Zipes, 2004, Fox Eades, 2006). These, however, tend to focus on the role of the teacher as story-teller. They appeal to practitioners' common sense knowledge that oral story telling is enjoyable in the classroom and has benefits in the primary school in terms of developing children's language skills and confidence. There is some research supporting that common sense knowledge (e.g. Rubright, 1996, Grainger, 1997, Cross, 2004, Zipes, 2004, Corbett, 2005, Fox Eades, 2006)

There is also a range of 'how to' literature available for the storyteller working with children or the teacher who wishes to use storytelling in the classroom (e.g., Mellon, 1992, MacDonald, 1993, Grainger, 1997, Lipman, 1999, Mellon, 2000, Grugeon and Gardner, 2000, Hartman, 2002, Fox Eades, 2006) but most of this relates to story-telling **for** children **by** adults. The children's role in the activities is often as audience. Within this body of literature there is only a relatively small amount of work which deals with children telling stories themselves or with ways to encourage children to collaborate to tell stories (Grainger, 1997, Zipes, 2004, Fox Eades, 2006). At the time of undertaking the literature search, there were no published studies dealing with collaborative storytelling by groups of middle or upper primary school children. Fox's (1993) classic work on children's storytelling studies individual pre-school children. Rubright, (1996), Zipes, (2004), Cross, (2004) and Corbett, (2005) have produced studies which show the impact of oral storytelling for

children, particularly for their developing literacy skills, but these authors do not focus on the collaborative processes of story production.

Many teachers consider that

Storytelling and storymaking are essential aspects of the psychological and linguistic development of all children . (Howe and Johnson, 1992:57)

Much of the value of oral story telling in primary education lies in the fact that children enjoy storytelling activities and so are motivated to learn through them. Many writers, (Fox, 1993, Grainger, 1997, e.g. Carter, 2000, Crystal, 1998,) have pointed out the fun element of talking and listening. As, for example, Fox (1993), Dyson (1996, 1997, 2003) and Annany (2002) have all observed that storytelling and play are closely related, with children developing stories through their informal play and also having a sense of play in their more formal story-making activities. Dyson recognised the value of children's story-making play in developing their skills as writers. The children in her studies were less aware of the value of their story-making play for the development of their literacy skills. They simply saw these activities as fun.

The fun element of talking and listening is often based on the social relationship between talker and listener. Dyson's children (1996, 1997, 2003) created their Author's Theatre scripts with the object of involving their particular friends in the fun. In oral story performance the relationship between teller and listener is fundamental (see MacDonald, 1993, Grainger, 1997, Mellon, 2000, Zipes, 2004, Fox Eades, 2006). These writers see the relevance of storytelling activities to children's social development as well as to their developing skills in reading and writing.

Oral storytelling also offers children the opportunity to enter into an imaginative world, to actively participate in creating a story and the enjoyment of patterns and repetition. Grainger considers that storytelling's '*spellbinding power can liberate children's imaginations, release their creativity.*' (1997:10) Howe and Johnson state that:

Over the last few years, oral storytelling has been undergoing a revival. ... This has coincided with an increased awareness of the value of the spoken word as a means of learning. (1992: vii)

For many educators (e.g. Adey and Shaver, 1994, 2003, Naylor, 2000) the desired outcomes of using oral language in schools are increasing skills and knowledge in other curricular areas. The desired outcomes of using storytelling activities in schools may be improved attainment in school-based literacy practices of reading and writing (e.g. Corbett and Rose, 2005). These dominate other language practices in our schools to such an extent that the term 'literacy' is often used to denote only those school-based reading and writing practices ratified by the literacy curriculum (Gee, 1994, Street, 2003). Gee, comparing oral and written language practices, writes of 'ways of making sense both in speech and writing' (1994:168), suggesting that there are overlaps between the development of some written literacy practices, such as narrative writing, and the development of oral language practices such as collaborative story-making and story performance.

Heath's (1983) study of home-based literacy practices in three Appalachian communities indicates that there are likely to be many other valid literacy practices for our pupils, including oral storytelling. Studies of text-messaging and on-line literacy practices (e.g. Light et al, 2000, Scanlon et al, 2000, Clement and Perret-Clermont, 2000, Carter, 2004, Gee, 2004) suggest that the literacy practices our pupils will need in their future lives are many and varied. Carrington and Luke point out, 'For the teacher, the practical problem lies in their inability to predict ... what forms of literate practices .. will consequentially 'count' in students' subsequent life trajectories.' (1997:99)

In our pupils' lifetimes there will inevitably be changes and developments in communication technology, (for example the need to spell accurately may be overtaken by further refinements in spellchecking technology) but the ancient skills of storytelling, which predate written literacy practices, are still likely to be useful in many contexts (see for example Maguire, 1998, Simmons, 2001,

Denning, 2005, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002, on the value of stories to businesses and organisations). Oral storytelling is perhaps one of oldest literacy practices known to humans. Its value in primary education may be related to its value in human societies throughout the world and throughout recorded history. Denning (2005) considers that storytelling is 'an activity that is practised incessantly by everyone.' Grainger, writing on oral story telling in the classroom, claims that stories can 'give children insights into the patterns and motives of human behaviour' (1997). Bettelheim (1991) uses a Freudian perspective to look at traditional stories and to explain their lasting impact on listeners in terms of their ability to help listeners to deal with challenges in their lives.

Various authors have noted a relationship between skills in oral storytelling and skills in reading and writing. Fox (1993) and Dyson (2003) both found that storytelling activities allow children to engage in the creation of oral texts, when they lack the skills to produce written texts. Corbett and Rose (2005) in a study on the impact of oral storytelling on children's written literacy practices, found that children's confidence and skills in writing stories improved through involvement in oral storytelling. This finding has been replicated by others (e.g. Zipes, 1995, Rubright, 1996, Grainger, 2001, Cross, 2004, Zipes, 2004, Haven, 2007). There is an argument for including storytelling in 21st century curricula. In the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, for example, which aims to develop 'confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors', learning outcomes for the primary years in literacy and English require the child to 'read, listen to or watch texts' (www.acurriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk) Dyson, (1996) in her study of children's emergent writing, looks forward to a school curriculum which has space for oral storytelling amongst other literacy practices.

In considering literacy practices in schools it is helpful to consider the nature of language itself. Bakhtin (1981) argued that language is always social because any language act functions as a response to past or future language acts. Any text, whether spoken or written, is considered to be dialogic, because it builds on previous texts and will serve to shape future texts. This is

particularly true of oral story telling, where different versions of the same story may be found in different geographical areas and different cultures, each new version having been built on what was heard earlier and stories having been taken by storytellers from one place to another, then re-told in a different context and a different culture. For children collaborating in oral story-making, language is necessarily dialogic, as they put forward their ideas, listen to others and build on previous contributions in their creation of a story. Oral story performance is also dialogic in the sense that it is a living dialogue between teller and listeners, as will be seen in the analysis of data in Chapter Five.

The literature on language offers powerful insights into the value of oral storytelling in schools and in particular into collaborative story-making and story performance. For Bruner, coming from a psychology background, language is 'the means by which we know other minds and possible worlds' (1986:64) drawing attention to the way in which speech reflects and is inextricably bound up with thought. Again, Bruner's conception of language is social, a way of negotiating and renegotiating meaning. Carter (2004), on the other hand, reminds us of the fun element of playing with words and patterns, which is not necessarily about constructing meaning (see earlier discussion above). This element is found in the puns and word play of everyday talk, the sophisticated use of language in poetry and in the repeated phrases, audience participation and nonsense words found in some oral stories.

Bruner draws on Chomsky's later work and the notion of an inborn predisposition, not just to develop language, but to generate a grammar which Chomsky considered to be universal and common to all known languages. Bruner wrote

the subtle and systematic basis on which linguistic reference itself rests must reflect a natural organisation of mind, one into which we grow through experience rather than one we achieve by learning.(1986: 63)

Bruner developed the idea of the inborn predisposition to generate language, expressed through the concept of an inborn language acquisition device or LAD, a concept which is fundamental to the work of Chomsky, the pioneer of the notion of a universal transformational grammar. Bruner proposed that there also exists a LASS, Language Acquisition Support System, provided by the social world, which is matched to LAD in some regular way. ((1986:77) These concepts offer insights into the skills of collaborative story-making and story performance in primary schools in that they suggest that these skills build on innate predispositions, for example that there may be an innate predisposition to create and to respond to narrative, a predisposition that precedes reading and writing.

2.7 The nature of narrative

Several writers have commented on the universality of storytelling across all cultures and argued that this suggests that the human brain is innately predisposed to construct and respond to narrative. For example, Fox, in her study of pre-school children's storytelling, looks at issues of narrative competence, considering the possibility that there might be some sort of universal 'story grammar' (1993:101-169). She cites Propp's (1968) analysis of traditional Russian folk stories and Bartlett's (1967) concept of mental schemata for story recall in support of this view. (1993:69). This brings us back to the idea that humans may have an innate predisposition to construct narratives. Just as Chomsky (1965) argued for the existence of a 'universal grammar' or structure underlying all languages, the work of Propp and Bartlett suggests that the structural devices of narratives might also be widespread through different cultures. Copley tells us that human 'have constantly told stories, presented events and squeezed aspects of the world into narrative form' (2000:2). Egan (1989) stated that the power of story is so great that teachers should consistently make use of the story form to enhance learning. Bruner (2003) considers that narrative shapes our understanding of the world.

So what is a story? What is narrative? Narratologists such as Bal distinguish between fabula 'a series of logically and chronologically related events', story, which is 'a fabula that is presented in a certain manner' and a narrative text 'in

which an agent relates ('tells') a story' (1997:5). Riessman, (2008:3) looking at narrative as data in the human sciences, points out that 'the term "narrative" ... is used in a variety of ways by different disciplines, often synonymously with "story".' For the purposes of this study, narrative will be treated as synonymous with story, as Riessman suggests. However, as the stories in my study are fiction, rather than recounts of real life happenings, it is useful to look at one or two of the ways in which the study of narrative is approached in literature. Although they are simple and short, the children's created stories can be understood as narratives and analysed in ways that have been suggested for the analysis of written narratives. In particular, a semiotic approach has been useful as has the analysis offered by the structuralist researcher into folk-lore, Propp (1968, 1984)

Definitions of narrative vary according to their purposes. So, where Toolan, a linguist, defines narrative as

an account of a sequence of events that are perceived to be non-randomly connected, typically involving one or more humans or other sentient participants, these being the experiencing individuals at the centre of events (2006:54)

for the primary school teacher, such definitions are of limited practical use. In working with primary school children, the main purpose of a definition may be to give guidance for the children's own-story-making, so a simple definition of a successful story might be that it has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Hartman (2002), a professional storyteller, extends this idea by saying that a story needs a beginning, a middle, an end and a problem. Bruner (1986:21) discusses the significance of characters, their plight and their consciousness in developing that 'structure which has a start, a development and a sense of ending' (1986:21). Bruner (1986:16) also discusses a basic story structure as a 'steady state, which is breached, resulting in a crisis, which is terminated by a redress.' For Bruner the development section of a successful story is seen in these terms of crisis and redress.

Semiotics, or the study of signs, offers a variety of approaches to the analysis of narrative. Greimas (1983) proposed a grammar of narrative themes. Martin,

drawing on Greimas, defines the basic unit of the narrative as an account of a change of state (1997:35-36). Martin's (1997) introduction to semiotic analysis, which takes the reader through the process of analysis of a text, suggests three levels at which a narrative might be analysed. These are the narrative, figurative and deep levels. The narrative level operates at the level of the events of the story, the figurative level relates to the themes and motifs which occur in the story - the elements in a text that correspond to the physical world' (1997:67) and the thematic, or deep level relates to the 'inner world of the conceptual and abstract' (1997:67). This is the level 'at which are articulated the fundamental values of the text' (1997:79). Martin's simple semiotic framework for analysis proved to be useful in analysing the children's collaborative stories in this study (see Chapter Five).

Structural semiotic analysis is less concerned with themes than with the building blocks from which narrative is constructed, and this attempt to reduce narratives to their simplest elements has led to this approach being termed 'reductionist' (Chandler, online. Barthes (1977:88) considers that the first task of the structural analyst is to define the smallest elements of narrative. Propp, (1968), attempted to do just that. He was a linguist with a strong interest in folk lore. Propp identified 31 'functions of dramatis personae' in 100 traditional oral Russian 'Wondertales' suggesting that these traditional tales can be reduced to a relatively small number of elements which recur across the different stories. For the purposes of my study, a traditional tale is defined simply as a story which has existed within an oral tradition over several generations. The detail of the traditional tale may vary considerably according to the interests and traditions of the teller. Many popular traditional tales exist in published forms, where again there is variation in detail of character and plot. It can be argued that some of Propp's functions are extremely broad. However, for the reader who knows some European traditional tales, the titles of the functions alone (e.g. I 'One of the members of a family absents himself from home', or XXX 'The villain is punished') are likely to evoke memories of these familiar traditional tales. So, although Propp's Morphology might be less than perfect for the folklorist, it provides a useful tool for identifying the structure of a story and also perhaps the influence of traditional tales on

children's collaborative stories, as can be seen in Chapter Five and Appendix F. Cook (1992) considers that Propp's approach, with its focus on underlying structures, neglects surface features which may be important.

Narratives can also be analysed in terms of their intertextuality, or borrowing from other sources, which may operate at both surface and deeper structural levels. As discussed earlier in Section x, Dyson (1996, 1997, 2003) draws on Bakhtin's concept of borrowing in her understanding of children's intertextual references, which are mainly to popular media. Fox (1993) devotes a chapter to the intertextual references in her children's stories. Fox solved the problem of analysis of data by using different analytical frameworks for different stories. For example, she makes use of Genette's (1997) analysis of focalisation, or the use of different narrative voices, in analysing particular stories. She also makes use of psychological approaches, for example the psychoanalytic approach of Bettelheim (1991) and Bartlett's (1967) work on memory as a social act of reconstruction.

It is interesting to note that the work of most narrative analysis relates to written, not oral stories. Even Propp's analysis of folk tales is based on print versions, rather than on the performance of these tales.

2.8 Storytelling and Performance Skills

Nineteenth and early twentieth century interest in storytelling focused on the printed text versions of traditional tales, with, for example, collections of stories produced by Perrault (2009) and by the brothers Grimm, (1984). However, the revival of interest in storytelling in both the US and the UK, which has taken place since the 1970s (documented by various authors (Grainger, 1997, Hartman, 2002, Zipes, 2004, Swann, 2009, etc) has lead to an interest in storytelling as a 'distinctive performance genre' (Swann, 2009:) which is separate from, for example, forms of theatre (Wilson, 2006). Bauman (1986:3) considers that 'the performance event has assumed a place beside the text as a fundamental unit of description and analysis'.

So what is involved in moving from everyday talk to 'taking the role of the performer' (Thornborrow and Coates 2005:68)? Barnes' concept of presentational talk, talk where the speaker is concerned with communicating with an audience, is only part of this change. Thornborrow and Coates argue that performance involves 'a focusing of communicative events' (2005:69). They identify seven dimensions of this focusing of communicative events into a performance. These are:

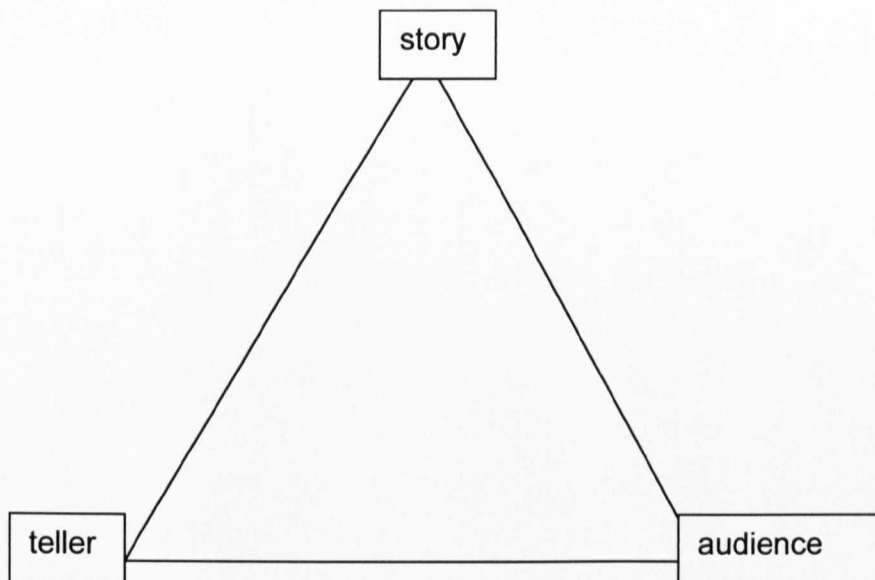
- Form focusing – the style of language used is important
- Meaning focusing – there is an intensity to utterances
- Situation focusing – performers and audiences are gathered together in norm-dictated contexts
- Performer focusing – performers 'hold a floor' and are listened to
- Relational focusing – performances are for a specific audience
- Achievement focusing – performances are evaluated with resulting praise or censure
- Repertoire focusing (2005:69) – performers and audience are sensitive to what is given and what is new in a performance.

Situation and achievement focusing seem to be more relevant to the performances of professional storytellers, so in considering children's early collaborative story performances in this study, the important dimensions are

- Form focusing
- Meaning focusing
- Performer focusing
- Relational focusing

Story telling performances differ from most theatrical performances in that each story performance is unique, because it relies on the unique relationship of the teller and the audience in the specific context. The story performer must use an outline of the plot (see discussion of 'bare bones in Chapter Five) and some sort of concept of the characters, but these may be varied according to the context of the performance. The teller does not learn a set script, but uses particular language and specific performance features to suit the context. (For example the story of the Gingerbread Man could be told many times with

various sets of characters, often suggested by the audience, and with various different endings, based on the storyteller's perceived needs of the immediate audience.) 'It is audience and storyteller together, then, that produce a particular type of performance.' (Swann, 2009:) Lipman (1999:17-18) introduces a third element into the performance event. He argues that a storytelling performance is based on a triangle of interaction between the story, the teller and the audience.



Although 'the story' does not exist as a given text, there is a sense in which the story is seen as something separate from the performance. Particularly relevant to traditional stories, there is among professional storytellers a concept of the story as an object and that when you hear a story it becomes yours. With the teller's permission, you may pass on to others in your own way (e.g. MacDonald, 1997). This interactive process could be seen in my study when the Dale children re-told traditional tales, sometimes consciously changing them and at other times unconsciously modifying them (see Chapter Four and Five). The triangle of interaction becomes even more dynamic when the storyteller asks for audience participation which may shape the plot. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four and Five. Swann notes that interacting with the audience is a 'significant aspect of performance by the professional storyteller (2009). She describes routines used to 'bring the audience into the story world', direct questioning of the audience and the use

of patterns involving rhythm and repetition, all of which were used by the children in the present study to a greater or lesser degree. Swann also notes that the use of mime, direct eye contact with the audience and the technique of directly addressing the audience were also used by the professionals to maintain audience involvement.

Swann (2009) in her study of performances by professional storytellers, considers the different semiotic resources available to the accomplished professional, grouping these into verbal language, poetic language and visual features (Swann, 2009). Her concept of verbal language here includes the use of different voices for different characters and for the narrator voice. Swann's concept of poetic language includes patterning, repetition, and verbal routines, widely used by professional storytellers and developed by some of the children in my study. Swann's visual features include gesture, facial expression, posture and movement. Swann notes that the professional storytellers she observed made sophisticated use of visual performance elements, for example by combining their narration with mime to represent a character's actions.

There is a range of literature to help the novice adult storyteller gain confidence and skills in story performance. Many of the writers are professional storytellers who have developed their performance skills to the levels described by Swann. It seemed useful to consider the skills identified in some of this literature and their relevance to the second research question, which seeks to identify skills involved in collaborative story performance by primary school children. I propose to consider literature which aims to help adults to develop their storytelling skills, Mellon, (1992), MacDonald, 1993, Rubright, 1996, Grainger, 1997, Maguire, (1998), Lipman, (1999), Grugeon and Gardner, 2000, Mellon, 2000, Simmons, (2001), Hartman (2002) Zipes, (2004), Denning, (2005), Fox Eades, (2006),

Some common threads emerge from this body of literature, which are relevant to the themes identified in the data in my study. On the structure of successful stories, these writers are in agreement with the child participants in

my study – there should be a beginning, a middle and an end. Hartman adds to this recipe 'a problem' () as did the children of the Hillside school P5-7 class. Mellon advises her readers to consider the emotional aspects of beginnings and endings (16-17), MacDonald advises them to 'prepare your audience' before beginning the story and to 'end with confidence' (:24 and 26) and Macguire to 'bring the tale to a gentle but definite end (187).

Other aspects of story structure commented on are the use of repetition, (Grainger, Hartman :47), the avoidance of irrelevant detail (Simmons:95) and the rule of three (Grainger). MacDonald advises her readers to 'revel in language (25) while Hartman suggest that they should 'go to the place of play' (). Denning and Mellon encourage the novice storyteller to enter into the story imaginatively.

On performance skills various writers comment on the use of different voices for different characters, and on other aspects of use of the voice, such as timing, tone, emphasis and pace (Maguire, Simmons, Hartman dates?). Simmons, Denning, and Hartman dates? point out the importance of non-verbal elements, such as gesture, facial expression, body language eye contact and posture. MacDonald advises readers to 'keep evaluating' their storytelling (21))

These writers are all in agreement about the importance of the teller's relationship with the audience. Hartman writes of the significance of eye contact and MacDonald tells her readers to 'communicate with the audience (24). Both Denning and Hartman write of the triangle of relationships between the story, the teller and the audience and Hartman, Grainger and MacDonald advise novice storytellers to develop the skills of inviting and making use of audience participation.

2.9 Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature in the light of my two research questions 'What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' and 'What

skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' This literature has informed the process of arriving at analytical frameworks described in Chapter Three and the analysis that follows in Chapters Four and Five. The research process has been an iterative one, involving many cycles of consulting the literature, considering its relevance to analysis of the data and returning to explore literature to identify further areas of interest. Lave and Wenger's apprenticeship model of learning as legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice, based on the concepts of socially situated learning and socially constructed knowledge, is a model which I found to be highly relevant to the learning of the children in my study who developed their skills in story-making and story performance through legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice of storytelling. Earlier studies by Fox and Dyson provided inspiration to examine the children's stories in detail and also modelled ways in which to address the research questions. Nevertheless, my current study does not aim to replicate the work of Fox and Dyson, but to shed light on the processes and the products of a very specific area of learning – the creation and performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of upper and middle primary children.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter locates my study within the interpretivist paradigm of qualitative research. In considering the ethical issues relevant to the study, issues around research with children are addressed. An argument is presented for considering this study to be an exploratory case study, as defined by Bassey (1999:58). It is also suggested that this study has elements of an evaluative case study and of action research. Questions about the insider-outsider continuum and the internal validity or trustworthiness of the research are raised. The relationship of methodology to methods is explored and an account provided of the research methods employed to collect and analyse the data. An overview of the data collected is provided, with an account of data selected for analysis and the reasons for this selection. An account is given of the process of analysis following Clarke's (2005) situational analysis integrated with insights from the literature. In the final section, conclusions are drawn about the methodology and methods employed in this study.

To reiterate, the research questions considered are:

1. What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?
2. What skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?

3.2 Philosophical underpinnings

This study is concerned with qualitative analysis of audio recordings of children participating in and discussing collaborative story-making and story performance activities, transcriptions of these recordings and reflective comments from my own research journals. This data was supplemented by audio recordings of interviews with head teachers, a small number of photographs, children's written and pictorial feedback and their own

photographs and video recordings. It follows Clark (2006) in using a 'mosaic approach' and using some different types of data to build up a picture of the skills that are involved in collaborative story-making and story performance in order to answer the research questions. The nature of the data and the attempt to produce in depth analysis of data from a small number of cases indicate clearly that it is a qualitative study.

The ontological and epistemological paradigm of this study is interpretivism, the view that there are many different ways to interpret the same situation and that 'all phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways' (Burgess, Sieminski and Arthur, 2006:55). This view is contrasted with the positivist paradigm, which looks for the objective truth in the situation. Interpretivism denies that such objective truth can be identified, if indeed it exists at all. Interpretivism relates to the post-modern understanding that nothing can be known with any certainty as all knowledge is socially constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1970) and 'all knowledges are understood... as situated knowledges' (Clarke, 2005:xxv), embedded in their social context. For Clarke (2005:xxiv) postmodernism is concerned with 'partialities, positionalities, complications, tenuousness, instabilities, irregularities, contradictions, heterogeneities, situatedness and fragmentation'. There can be no certainties or objective truths. As MacLure points out, post-modern thinking is often defined 'in terms of what it sets itself *against*: notably, the rationalist, humanist world view that is the continuing legacy of the seventeenth century Enlightenment' (2003:174). For Richardson (2000:928) 'The core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory ... has a universal claim as the 'right' or privileged form of authoritative knowledge.' However, post-modern thinking opens up a flexible and fluid way of thinking and a deep respect for different perspectives. As such it is appropriate for my study, where children's skills and understanding develop within specific social contexts.

The post-modern understanding of truth as relative and knowledge as socially situated has lead to an understanding that the researcher can never be a detached and objective observer, whose findings could be replicated by other

researchers. Each research context is unique and each researcher builds on his/her previous knowledge and understanding in interpreting the findings. Clough (2002:80) points out the trend in recent educational research for a greater awareness of 'the researcher themselves, and their very insertion in the process of research.' My knowledge and understanding of children's collaborative story-making and story performance relies on understanding that has been built up from a variety of perspectives, making use of a number of different discourses of practice. These include that of a teacher, with an awareness of learning intentions, learning outcomes and skills and also what I understand of the children's evaluations with a focus on the continua of fun/boring, easy/hard, scary/OK. Equally my knowledge and understanding of children's collaborative story-making and story performance have developed through my developing understanding of a variety of perspectives from academic knowledge, for example issues of the value of oral storytelling in primary education, collaborative learning, oral language and creativity in schools, language and creativity, cultural aspects of children's storytelling, the nature of narrative and storytelling as performance which are considered in the Literature Review (Chapter Two).

General points can be distilled from the findings of this study and it is these general points which will be useful to teachers and other practitioners interested in children's collaborative storytelling. However, each storytelling session in the data was unique and could not be replicated. Each session relied on the input of the researcher and of the participating children in constructing an understanding of what was happening and what might be learned from it in terms of shedding light on the research questions. For these reasons, children's own discussion and evaluation of their own story-making and story performance form part of the data analysed in this study. Analysis of the data is a process of social construction of knowledge. All phenomena can be interpreted in different ways by different people and the children in the study had a role to play in this social construction of knowledge. Their own evaluations were sought throughout the data collection by specific questioning and listening to and noting their views. Their own insights into what they liked

or didn't like and into what made a successful story were a valuable input into the process of analysis of the data.

Bassey considers that 'the public world is positivist, the private world is interpretative' (1999:44), suggesting that while governments and major institutions may make use of large-scale quantitative research, everyday or professional knowledge is built up from an endless series of case studies, interpreted by participants. This study is an example of such a case study, a 'study of singularity' (Bassey 1999:47). The reflective practice of a researcher, like that of a teacher, is always interpretive, making use of a variety of perspectives to understand and interpret the data of the individual case.

3.3 Ethics and research with children

Scott and Usher state that, in all research 'Issues of power... are always already present, ... regardless of intent or locating paradigm (1999:18). In research with children, issues of power between the adult researcher and the participating children are particularly evident. In this study, my role as the facilitator within the storytelling club or teacher conducting class sessions and my regular presence in the schools as a supply teacher had a significant impact on what the children do and say. I was there to help develop children's skills in collaborative storytelling, as well as to observe and understand the processes involved in this development. I planned and delivered the storytelling sessions. Children tend to conform to adult expectations, particularly in a school context, and when asked their opinion, they are likely to say what they feel the adult would like them to say. Inevitably the distribution of power between myself and the children was unequal and they perhaps agreed with me without actually thinking through the question (e.g. Jessica and David's responses to my question in Appendix D, turns 12-13. As a teacher, I was very conscious of my learning outcomes for the storytelling sessions and was often aware of guiding the children in the direction on these learning outcomes, for example when I intervened in David and Kelly's story.

- 3 Kelly ...And the light saver
- 4 David Sabre.
- 5 Kelly And this old woman turned into a wizard ...
- 6 David Wasn't it a giant wizard?
- 7 AMcS Could you let Kelly tell her part of the story because we were all quiet for you.

However, I always tried to make it clear that the children's contributions were valued, for example in the discussion of sources of 'borrowing' in stories. (Appendix D, turns 5-7). In the class situation I had already established an ethos of respect for children's views, but this was within a context of well-established class discipline. In the after-school club children were less sure of expectations and at times tested the boundaries of what they might say that would still be respected for example when Jason repeatedly introduced a pig into a large group collaborative story (Appendix, N, D15) Issues of ground rules and respect for others formed part of this process of negotiation.

An implication of the interpretivist paradigm for the research design is that the children themselves should be involved as much as possible in the process of reflecting on their experiences of storytelling and on the recorded data in terms of 'What was good about that piece of storytelling? What could have been better?' These questions were asked about my own storytelling as well as about the children's (e.g. Appendix N, D5, D12) In this way it was hoped that participants would be empowered and given a voice by being involved in attributing meaning to the phenomena being studied. However, it was difficult to develop this aspect of the study as much as I would have wished, due to constraints of time, the Dale School storytelling club children's clear preference for listening to stories above other activities and the fact that the research questions were not finalised until after the data was collected. I

attempted to find different and appropriate ways to give the children a voice with regard to the research questions, for example by asking children to video and/or take still photographs of activities, by asking for their opinions in writing or drawing on the storytelling club application form and by the occasional use of post-it notes to build up a picture of children's viewpoints. The understanding and evaluation of participating children, mostly expressed in discussion, forms part of my research data (e.g. Appendix N, D9, D12, D15, D21, D24, D28, D34, D36, H1, H6, H9, H17) and in analysis I have made use of the criteria for a successful story drawn up by the children in each context.

Particularly in the after-school club, I was dependent on these children participating in my sessions and giving their permission for the use of research data. In these areas the balance of power was different from that in a normal class situation, where the teacher is in control of the learning outcomes and children must comply with the teacher's intentions for the lesson or accept the consequences of non-compliance. As a researcher I was asking children questions to which I did not know the answer. I genuinely wanted to know what they thought. The benefits that I gained from working with these children were great. They provided me with the data that I needed to develop, understand and answer my research questions. I felt that it was important that the children should also benefit from the sessions. In the short term I wanted to give them enjoyable experiences of working together in a creative community of practice, of story-making and performance. In the long term I hoped that they would benefit from the storytelling sessions by developing greater understanding of and skills in collaborative working, the creation of narratives and story performance.

The two contexts of the after-school club and class sessions brought out further differences in the power relations between myself and the participating children. In Hillside School class sessions, the pupils saw me as a teacher because they knew me in the role of a supply teacher who had covered for their absent class teacher for five weeks. They were already familiar with some of my strategies for learning – for example collaborative group work, peer evaluation and learning through talking and listening. They accepted my

right to expect their participation as part of my role as teacher, When I later returned to the school on a voluntary basis I stepped back into the role of teacher, even though I used the same procedures for obtaining their informed consent to participation in the research as I had done in the Dale after-school club. In the after-school club children's expectations were different as they (in consultation with their parents) had chosen to give up other leisure activities in order to take part. Those children who did not wish to attend the club were able to drop out of any session, or of all subsequent sessions. Those who attended felt able to ask for their wishes to be taken into account, for instance when they asked for more time for listening to stories and less time for collaborative story-making (D15) This comparison of the two contexts is useful in considering implications for practitioners.

Lloyd-Smith and Tarr have written about the vulnerability of children in an education system where parents are seen as the consumers and pupils may be seen as commodities (2000:59). For the parents of some children in the after-school club this club was seen as helpful to the development of their child (e.g. David's mother indicated to me that she felt that the club would help him to develop listening skills and Angus and Paul's mothers both indicated that they felt that the club would help to develop their children's confidence (D9). It is possible that some parents also thought that the club met their own needs by providing free after-school care (For example, Angus's mother worked until 4.30 pm (D9). Lloyd-Smith and Tarr point out that 'the reality experienced by children and young people in educational settings cannot be fully comprehended by inference and assumption (2000:61) This study attempts to treat children, not as the passive subjects of research, nor as the passive subjects of teaching, but as participants with views which should be sought by appropriate means. However, as indicated above, there were times when these intentions conflicted with my need as a researcher to obtain usable data for analysis, for example when children in the after-school club expressed a desire for more listening to stories rather than their own collaborative story-making or story performance, or my need as a teacher or after-school club leader to conduct structured sessions with clear learning intentions, for example when deciding whether or not to change direction in

the middle of a session in order to meet the perceived needs or wishes of the participating children (e.g Appendix N, D9). Also, I had to recognise that the children were not as interested in discussing the emerging research questions as I was myself and that the Dale School storytelling club members wanted some fun and relaxation after their day at school.

This discussion of research with children has concentrated on my attempts to give children a voice. However, underlying this discussion is my own culturally-influenced understanding of the concept of children as people who may have different needs and rights from those of adults. Concepts such as 'children' or 'childhood' are social constructs and are interpreted in different ways by different cultures at different times. Another aspect of current attitudes towards research with children can be seen as part of the protection paradigm that features strongly in many aspects of life. The child is seen as 'a subject in need of protection by adults' (Lloyd Smith and Tarr, 2000:65) Children are seen as vulnerable people who are not yet able to deal with the dangers posed by others and who therefore must increasingly be protected from these dangers by sets of rules ranging from ethical codes to formal legislation. Ethical guidelines on research with children are mainly concerned with protection of the child's interests. It is not ethical to make use of children in research without gaining their informed consent (Lindsay, 2000:12-13). In my study the need to obtain informed consent meant explaining to children, in language that they could understand, what the study involved, why I was undertaking it and also how findings might be disseminated in the future. I explained this to children in my introductory sessions to classes (see Appendix N, D5 and H1). Children were told that they could withdraw their permission at any time. This information was summarised in writing and the participating children all signed a consent form (Appendix L). They also wrote and/or drew their reasons for wanting to take part (see Appendix N, D6 and Appendix M). Adult 'gatekeepers' controlling access were parents and head teachers. Parents were provided with written information on the research and also had the opportunity to discuss it with the researcher face to face or by email. Several parents took up the opportunity to do this, expressing their interest in the area of study, asking questions and/ or talking about their own

child (Appendix N, D9, D12). The purpose and methods of the research were explained to the head teachers of the two schools who also gave their permission. Both head teachers considered that my data collection offered benefits to their school (see Appendix N, D3 and H1).

3.4 Case study research

The small-scale exploratory nature of this study leads towards a case study approach as this approach requires the researcher to study and analyse in depth a small number of cases. The focus is on the quality of the analysis rather than on the quantity of data analysed.

‘Case study gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied at some depth within a limited timescale’ (Bell 1999:10)

A case study approach allowed me to investigate the key skills involved in the process of collaborative story-Making and the products of that process – the collaborative stories and their performance, by focusing on two specific contexts where I could explore and compare the development of these skills.

Case studies can take many forms, but a useful definition of a typical case study is provided by Cohen and Manion:

The case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit (1985:124-5).

The study is a case study in that it investigates data drawn from a small number of instances. It is an investigation of my own approaches to introducing oral storytelling and in particular, collaborative oral story-making and story performance by small groups of children, in two primary schools. It aims to ‘probe deeply and analyse intensively’ (see Chapters Four and Five which deal with analysis) in order to answer the research questions and

identify some of the key skills involved in the process of creating and in the performance of collaborative stories. For Bell the strength of the case study is that it 'allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific ...situation and to identify ... interactive processes at work' (1999:11) This means it is ideal for answering the present research questions. The study makes use of data gathered in specific situations where oral storytelling was introduced. It makes use of my insider knowledge of learning and teaching and also on the perceptions of participating children about their own learning. As researcher (not just as facilitator/teacher) I am part of the data being studied as my own perceptions and understanding are part of the analysis.

Edwards and Talbot, (1999) consider that case studies can be exploratory studies used to 'explain or illustrate aspects of the complexity evident in more general findings' (1999:51) or for the purpose of 'gaining insights into the area of study' (1999:53) This study aims to gain insights by exploring the process of creating and performing collaborative oral stories, so it is clearly exploratory.

My study can also be seen to have elements of the evaluative case study as it seeks to explore the value of an educational initiative (Bassey, 1999:58). As such it can be related to action research, which traditionally involves looking at changes brought about by a particular intervention or series of interventions (Cohen and Mannion,1989:208). It is 'a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of that intervention', (Halsey, cited in Cohen and Manion 1985:208). Cohen and Manion identify five purposes for action research, of which two are relevant here. They are: providing continuing professional development (CPD) for the teacher researcher; offering a 'preferable alternative to the more subjective impressionistic approach to problem-solving in the classroom' (1985:211). Undertaking this study has provided CPD in terms of reflection on an aspect of my professional practice and it has given me the opportunity to undertake a more rigorous investigation than would normally be possible in the context of everyday classroom practice. These purposes relate to the concept of reflective practice which became well-established in teacher CPD in the latter

part of the twentieth century (eg Pollard, 2002). Kemnis provides an account of action research as a 'participatory democratic form of educational research for educational improvement' (2002:177).

Cohen and Manion trace the roots of action research to the positivist paradigm and scientific method. However, for Kemnis, action research is firmly within the interpretivist paradigm (2002:179). He describes it as a 'form of self-reflective enquiry' with three purposes, all of which are relevant here. These are 'to improve the rationality and justice of a) their own... educational practices b) their understanding of these practices and c) the situations in which the practices are carried out (2002:177). Drawing on Lewin, Kemnis describes the self-reflective spiral of planning, fact-finding and execution (2002:178). There is an underlying assumption that action research will feed into practice.

A similar assumption underlies this exploratory study. Within the Literature Review, I articulate why collaborative oral storytelling is valuable in primary schools. I am then more able to justify it in my practice. Gaining a better understanding of and identifying some of the skills involved in the process of creating and in the performance of collaborative stories, I will be better able to recognise and develop these skills. When, through analysis of the data and consideration of the implications for policy and practice of my findings, I have a better understanding of strategies which teachers might use to enhance children's collaborative oral storytelling, I will be able to make use of these strategies and introduce them to colleagues.

Where my study does not fit into Kemnis' concept of modern action research (2002:179) is that it is carried out by a single researcher, rather than by a practitioner collaborating with colleagues. It is in the nature of the Ed D programme that the research should be carried out by the individual research student. For Kemnis, action research is essentially participatory, involving all participants in the processes of reflection. In this study I have tried to find ways to involve the children in the process of reflection-on-action and in formulating answers to the research questions, for example by asking them to

evaluate the collaborative story-making and story performance of their peers and themselves. I have discussed the study with head teachers and class teachers. However, although I have valued all these inputs, full collaboration on the analysis was not part of the design of this study, although it could be a useful element in future studies, which might take a more traditional action research approach. The present study, then, is most usefully seen as an exploratory case study which contains elements of action research.

3.5 Insider-outsider issues

Cohen and Mannion (1989:122) categorise observation as participant or non-participant. Other researchers argue that such a distinction is artificial. For instance, Bassey points out that interpretive researchers should always recognise themselves as potential variables in an enquiry (1999:43). Hammersley (1993) considers that there are advantages and disadvantages to both the positions of outsider and insider in research. He argues for a 'judicious combination of involvement and estrangement' (1993:219)

In every case study the researcher will be both participant and non-participant, insider and outsider. The researcher can never be a complete outsider in the research context, but will occupy multiple positions along a continuum between insider and outsider, according to which aspect of the research context is being considered (Hellowell, 2006). In this study I am a participant as a facilitator or teacher who initiates and develops activities. However I cannot participate in the children's cultures, but must observe as an outsider. In seeking to learn more about children's storytelling, I am an outsider. I am an adult trying to understand children's perception of their own learning. As a teacher, seeking to introduce collaborative storytelling activities into primary schools, I am an insider in that I have experience of reflecting on learning and teaching and I am familiar with the context of a Scottish primary school, with its curricula, values, power systems etc. If I were a professional storyteller my understanding would be different and I would be more of an outsider in a school context, although I would be an insider in the community of practice of professional storytellers. However, even if I now go into a school in the role of storyteller, rather than as teacher, I cannot lose the knowledge

gained through years of primary teaching. In reflecting on my own practice in introducing storytelling into schools, I am very much an insider, as I know my own intentions, aspirations and understandings better than anyone else, although I am trying to develop a more objective outsider position by the process of reflection, by reading and by seeking evaluation from and shared reflection with others. Clough argues against what he sees as the traditional attempts to 'suppress the subjective responses of the researcher' (2002:83) in writing research reports. My own subjective responses form part of my data, as they are part of the storytelling sessions and my own reflection on these sessions recorded in my research journal. They also influence my analysis of the data, for this process involves selection and interpretation. The process of reading, understanding and engaging with the relevant literature, a process which is indicated by the Literature Review, has broadened, deepened and developed my subjective responses.

However, it is not possible to do this without becoming involved in the situation that one wishes to study. A participant observer must always be conscious of his/her own roles and influence on what is observed. The issue of power relations between adults and children and between teachers and pupils was discussed earlier, as it is very relevant to my role as a participant in this study. My roles in the two contexts were different and in both of these contexts my role differed from that in the school in my earlier M Ed study (McSeveney, 2005) where I considered different types of talk in children's collaborative storytelling activities. In the 2005 study school, I was more of an insider, working with pupils who had been in my class for ten months. The children were very clear about the power relations between us and also knew the expectations that I had of them. They were familiar with collaborative work in all curricular areas and they had ten months' experience, both of listening to oral stories told in school and of developing their own storytelling skills. In the current study, I was more of an outsider and had to negotiate roles within the two schools. Within a short space of time I had to establish the community of practice which would support creative storytelling in each context.

In my 2005 study, I worked with classes which I taught on a full-time basis. With those classes, collaborative work was used throughout the curriculum. It formed part of the community of practice that supported children's learning. Ground rules for talking and listening were established with the children at the beginning of the school year. Mercer et al, (2000) stress the importance of establishing the ground rules for collaborative talk. Although their work is concerned with developing the exploratory talk that is needed for rational-logical collaborative discussion, I have found their technique of working with the children to establish ground rules to be equally useful for the creative talk of collaborative story-making and incorporated this process into early sessions of the storytelling club.

When I had previously introduced collaborative storytelling to a class, I had been that class's main teacher for a whole year and I told stories to them on a regular basis, which allowed me to model oral storytelling techniques for the children. Modelling by a more experienced other is one of the features of scaffolding of learning identified by Rogoff (1990). In the context of oral storytelling, I have found it to be an important feature. My own modelling of storytelling, both in the after-school club and the classroom contexts, allowed me to identify examples of children making use of language and skills modelled by myself and by other, more capable children (e.g. Appendix N, D12).

Hellawell (2006) considers that the researcher can benefit from the different perspectives of insider and outsider (2006:497). He relates this to the Brechtian concept of the *Verfremdungseffekt*, a theatrical device used to remind the audience that they are watching a play and therefore that they should take a step back and reflect on the action. Analysis of data for this research has involved many *Verfremdungseffekten*. Analysing the data of this study has been a cyclical process of distancing myself from the data and from my insider positions to reflect objectively as a researcher and then moving back from this outsider position to the immerse myself in the data once more.

In the storytelling club I sometimes experienced conflicting roles where my teacher role lead me to think that I should be teaching children skills whereas my role as a researcher was to observe and learn from the children. The sense of working towards a performance also impacted on my role. My own expectations of standards in children's performances lead me to spend time rehearsing polishing performances, to meet my own criteria for a successful performance. I tried to take the children's own views into account but I could not abandon my own desire to achieve the best possible performance.

Children in the Dale School storytelling club were not confident about performing in front of others and I had to modify my approach accordingly (see Appendix N, D36). In the classroom situations my main role was to support the children in learning about oral storytelling. Again the sense of working, albeit over a shorter time-scale, towards a performance, this time for younger children, impacted on my role. However, I was also conscious of my role as researcher, seeking to explore the process of collaborative story-making and to identify the skills involved in that process, in the creation and performance of successful stories.

Kemnis comments on the (sometimes detrimental) impact of outsiders on research by practitioners (2002:186). However, he acknowledges that such outsiders may be useful in providing a variety of support for the practitioner researchers. I consider that the researcher can be simultaneously both outsider and insider and that there are benefits to be derived from being both insider and outsider. The structure of the Ed D programme provides an additional outsider influence on the research, an influence which could at times be construed as constraining and restricting, but is nevertheless highly supportive in terms of providing an objective and distanced perspective on the research.

3.6 Trustworthiness and generalisability

Cohen and Mannion (1989) consider that the purpose of a case study is to provide a basis for generalisation. Case study researchers who wish to make generalisations on the basis of their findings need to ensure that their case study context is representative of a wider population to which findings might

be generalised. In some research contexts it may be possible to choose a case as being representative of a wider population to which findings might be generalised, but in an exploratory study this is not possible. There is no previous body of knowledge which identifies factors which would indicate whether the case is representative of a wider population. No attempt was made to identify a representative sample in this study, as it was not possible to identify those features that would make the sample representative of a wider population, for example, which previous skills and experience might be relevant to children acquiring the skills of oral storytelling.

However, identifying generalisable findings is not the only purpose of undertaking a case study. Burgess, Sieminski and Arthur see one of the strengths of the case study as its ability to 'provide unique examples of people in real situations' (2006:59). My study is able to provide insight into unique examples of real children telling stories in real contexts. Scott and Usher (1999:86-87) problematise the issue of the case as representative of a population. They suggest that in researching education, it is unlikely that a researcher can identify a single case which can be considered as a representative sample of a population. In a study such as this it is more important to aim for internal consistency and trustworthiness. Although the cases are limited and not chosen as representative of a wider population, the understanding of the research questions that is developed in this small in-depth study will be of value to others interested in oral storytelling in primary schools. The possibilities for generalisation from this study are necessarily limited, but as such insights are gained within the framework of systematic and rigorous Ed D research, they are likely to be more generalisable than those gained through the everyday professional reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action of the busy teacher.

Cohen and Mannion (1989) distinguish between the internal validity of research – are its findings consistent with reality or the truth? – and the external validity, which we could call generalisability – can its findings be considered to apply to a wider population? Internal validity implies that there is a single truth or reality waiting to be discovered. An interpretivist perspective suggests that there is no single truth, but a multitude of interpretations of truth.

In this study I shall aim for internal validity, bearing in mind those multiple interpretations of the truth.

For Bassey (1999) the underlying ethic of the case study researcher should be respect for truth. He replaces the concepts of reliability and validity, commonly used in quantitative studies with a positivist perspective, or internal and external validity, used by Cohen and Manion, with the single term 'trustworthiness' (1999:74-7) Bassey (1999:75) provides a check list for the researcher to evaluate the methods of the study in terms of their trustworthiness. These begin with, 'Has there been prolonged engagement with data sources?' They finish in the final stage of research, reporting of the research, with 'Does the case record provide an adequate audit trail?' Bassey's check list is one way to achieve rigour in evaluating the methods employed in this study against criteria of trustworthiness and internal validity and will be used in Chapter Six to consider how far this study has met the need for trustworthiness.

Bassey (1999) distinguishes three types of generalisation, scientific, statistical and 'fuzzy'. Only the third is relevant to this study. Bassey coins the term 'fuzzy generalisation', which he considers is more trustworthy than 'phony exactness' because it recognises that there may be exceptions. (1999:51-4). Fuzzy generalisation is 'qualified generalisation, carrying the idea of possibility but no certainty' (1999:46) It says that there is a degree of generalisation possible. Expressing ideas of fuzzy generalisation in Chapters Four, Five and Six, phrases used to frame conclusions are: 'it is possible, or likely or unlikely that...' indicating the notions of possibility or probability but not certainty.

However, in seeking for trustworthiness, it is less important to strive for generalisability than that this study should be, in Bassey's words, 'a study of singularity, conducted in depth in natural settings.' (1999:47) Bassey cites Stake and Trumbull who feel that 'case studies should provide opportunities for vicarious experiences so that readers can make their own ... generalisations' (1999:33) or in Bassey's words, a case study should be 'an

invitation to try it and see if it works for you' (1999:52). It is my aim to produce such a study here.

3.7 Methods

The study is based on analysis of data collected in the natural contexts of an after-school club for P3 and P4 children in Dale Primary School and a P5-7 class in Hillside School. (These names are pseudonyms, as are the names of all participants. See discussion of ethical issues earlier in this chapter.) The methods are those of the participant observer, attempting to observe and understand whilst being actively involved in the context (see earlier discussion). Issues of insider-outsider knowledge were discussed earlier in this chapter and the participant observer must continually re-negotiate roles within the insider-outsider spectrum. To observe and reflect on the learning situation inevitably involves observation and reflection on one's own multiple roles in that situation. Questions about the collection of data and the type of data to be collected must inevitably involve consideration of the practicalities of sustaining these roles.

Initially, the research design involved collecting data only from the after-school storytelling club at Dale School. In September, 2007, at the beginning of data collection, the research questions were:

1. Why is oral storytelling valuable in primary schools?
2. How do children's developing communication and social skills facilitate the process of collaborative storytelling?
3. What are some of the key skills in collaborative storytelling and what strategies might teachers use to enhance children's collaborative storytelling?

This club allowed me easy access to a group of children in a primary school, as I was offering something of benefit to the school, the children and the parents. Story-making and story performance are examples of creative

activities which can be seen as a development of children's own play, so a club setting was particularly suitable, being less formal than a school class and not competing with the other demands of the curriculum. The use of an after-school storytelling club allowed me to work with small numbers, which made it easier to engage all the children in discussion and evaluation, to obtain audio data from small groups and to take observational notes. It also provided an opportunity to focus on storytelling and the development of children's skills in this area, without conflicting demands on my teaching time. Conflicts did arise between my role as researcher and my role as club facilitator, but the benefits of adopting the different perspectives were extremely useful in developing the analysis.

As the collection of data progressed, I was concerned that the children in the club might not develop skills in story-making and story performance as quickly as I had expected. I reflected on comparisons between the skills of these children and the skills of children in my 2005 study. This made me consider the importance of legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice on a daily basis for development of skills in story-making and story performance. My contact with the children of the storytelling club was limited to one session per week and I wondered how successfully I could build up the creative community of practice on that basis. As time went on, I saw however that the children in the storytelling club did significantly develop their skills in story-making and story performance over the nine sessions of the club and their development of skills proved very helpful to me as a researcher in understanding these skills. This area proved so interesting that, over time, I clarified the focus of my research questions to concentrate on the skills involved in story-making and story performance.

During the period of data collection at Dale Primary School, I was becoming familiar with the context of Hillside School in my role as supply teacher. I taught a various times in all three classes of this small school and for five weeks I covered for the absence of the P5-7 class teacher on a full-time basis. It seemed to me that many of the Hillside children already possessed the skills which the Dale children were beginning to develop. Discussion with

the head teacher at Hillside School suggested that she would be very happy for me to undertake a small number of storytelling sessions with classes in the school so I decided to modify the research design and to collect additional data from Hillside School. There were practical issues over fitting in storytelling sessions at times that were mutually convenient, but I was able to arrange for one session with the P3-4 class and three sessions with the P5-7 class. These sessions were all on a voluntary basis. Following discussion with the children, the third of these P5-7 sessions was an opportunity for the P5-7 children to perform their collaborative stories for the P1-2 class.

3.8 The contexts

The first of the two contexts was an after-school storytelling club at Dale School, with around 150 pupils, in single stage classes. Children attending the club were two girls and six boys from the P3 and P4 classes. Their ages ranged from seven to nine. The children's ethnic origins were white, Scottish or white, English. In the first club session children were asked about their previous experience of oral storytelling. At least two of the children had some experience of oral storytelling in their homes (Appendix N, D9) but they had very little experience of oral storytelling in school. Oral storytelling is not normally used by teachers in the school but prior to starting the after-school club, I undertook a 30 minute oral storytelling session with both the Primary 3 and Primary 4 classes.

The school is situated in a large village where the majority of parents work locally or are unemployed. There is a high proportion of social housing in the village. The club was organised and run by myself. There were nine 75 minute sessions and eight children attended the club, although none of these children were present at all of the nine sessions. (see Table 1 - Summary of information about children). Activities were based around listening to and telling stories. Following the ninth session an informal story performance was given for family and friends (D35) and subsequently four of the children also took part in story performances for other classes in the school. These were at two half school assemblies and for the nursery class (D36).

The second context was a smaller school, Hillside School (47 pupils), situated on the edge of a very small village about eight miles from Dale School. Here I worked with a composite P5-7 class, a class which I had taught for five weeks as a supply teacher. Children's ages in this class ranged from 9 to 12. For the purposes of collecting data for this study, I organised and taught two one and a half hour sessions on collaborative storytelling. This was followed up two weeks later with a half hour revision session, followed by a story performance for the P1/2 class. I also organised and taught a one hour session on collaborative storytelling with the P3/4 class in a voluntary capacity, which provided a more direct comparison with the after-school storytelling club at Dale School, where participants were also from P3 and P4. Unfortunately it was not possible for me to teach a series of lessons with this P3/4 class.

I did not record every session in total but attempted to select relevant data to record. There were a number of reasons for this decision. One reason was that to record thirteen complete sessions would have produced a huge amount of recorded data which would have necessarily included material that was not relevant to the research questions. Another reason was the recognition of my various roles as teacher, facilitator and researcher. I felt that I wanted to be comfortable in each of those roles and not devote myself completely to the role of researcher. On reflection, it would have been easier for me to have taken on the role of objective researcher if the research contexts had been a storytelling club organised and run by someone else and a class taught by another teacher. However, I feel that the insider perceptions that I gained from taking on all these roles helped me to address the research questions more fully.

3.9 Storytelling club and class activities

Club sessions involved a number of different activities. These included:

1. Oral stories told to the children
2. Discussion of these with the children

3. Games and activities designed to help children develop skills needed for story-making, collaborative group work or story performance.
4. Children's collaborative creation of oral stories
5. Children's collaborative performance of oral stories
6. Children's evaluation, with adult support, of their own collaborative stories
7. Children's evaluation of and feedback to their peers on collaborative stories
8. Performances of collaborative stories for various audiences
9. Performances of collaborative stories by myself and groups of children for various audiences

I was able to record a selection of each of these activities, with the exception of 9), performances of collaborative stories by myself and groups of children. Video of one session was filmed by participating children.

The Hillside P5-7 class sessions were more focused on planning and performing oral stories for the P1/2 class, but included all of activities 1) to 8). I was able to record selections of each of these activities, although, because of the classroom situation, with several groups talking at the same time, it proved almost impossible to transcribe recordings activity 4), children's collaborative creation of oral stories. Video and photographs of one session were taken by participating children.

3.10 Data collected

Most of the data collected is in the form of audio files, transcripts of sections of these and my field notes recorded in the research journal. Children's ideas and understanding were generally sought by questioning and discussion (e.g. Appendix N, D9, D12, D15, D21, D24, D28, D34, D36, H1, H6, H9, H17) and sometimes sought through games (e.g. Appendix N , D9) and activities, for example by the use drawing and writing about storytelling on their application forms to join the storytelling club (Appendix M) or by the use of Post-it notes

(e.g D15). These are noted in the research journal. There are also small quantities of video recordings and photographs taken by children. Where possible I involved the children in the collection of the data, asked them if we should record an activity and asked individual children to take photographs or videos. Inevitably this lead at times to a loss of potential data, or to data of doubtful quality, but it was important to me to involve children as far as I could. I had hoped to collect a wider variety of data from the children, making use of Clark's 'mosaic approach' (2006). Clark used this multi-method approach to building up understanding of participants' perceptions in a pre-school context. In addition to the traditional ethnographic tools of observation and interview, Clark used a variety of methods to maximise the opportunities for children to find their 'voice' and contribute to the overall picture or 'mosaic.' In my own study I found that constraints of time and of my various participatory roles made it difficult to develop children's participation in these ways. I found that discussion with the children seemed to be the most effective way of eliciting their views. In both contexts, children drew up the criteria for a successful story which were used in club or class sessions to evaluate stories and which have been used in my analysis (see Appendix N, D12, D15, H6).

Appendix N gives an indication of the types of data, when and where collected and the contexts in which it was collected.

3.11 Data selected for analysis

As will be seen from Appendix N, a large amount of data was collected and considered in the process of analysis. Following preliminary identification of themes, five collaborative stories were chosen as the focus for the analysis which is detailed in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four deals with analysis of the process of collaborative story-making and Chapter Five deals with the products of this process – the collaborative stories considered as narrative and as performance. The five stories are:

- *The Snake in the Box*, Dale School storytelling club, – a very short collaborative story, created and told in the fourth session of the club.

Tellers: Jessica and Jason . Story stimulus: story opener about children finding a box. This story tells of a snake which jumped out of the box and slithered away.

- *The Light Sabre in the Box*, Dale School storytelling club, – a rather confused collaborative story, also created and told in the fourth session of the club. Tellers: David and Kelly . Story stimulus: story opener about children finding a box. This story tells that there a light sabre and a chicken head were in the box, police were hunting a terrorist who lived in the house and an old woman, who was really the children's grandma disguised as a wizard, offered to take the children home.
- *The Door in the Hill*, Dale School story-telling– a successful collaborative story. Tellers: Jessica, David and Paul. This was created in the seventh session of the club, retold in the ninth session of the club and performed for an audience of family and friends. Story stimulus: story opener about two children and their pets going for a walk and finding what looked like a door in the hillside. This story tells how, inside the door, there was a witch who wanted to eat them. The two children escaped from the witch and returned home, only to find that the witch had arrived before them and transformed into their mother, who told them to go back up the hill, where they were once again captured by the witch. This time the witch put them into cages but the boy, Michael, was able to cut through the bars of with a little pocket knife. The children pushed the witch into the cauldron where she turned into chocolate. Michael ate a bit of the chocolate and the children and their pets returned home safely.
- *The Last Noonoo*, Hillside School P5-7 class session – a collaborative story, based on a published text, created during the first class session and performed with audience participation for a class of younger children during the third class session. The telling was dominated by one child. Tellers: John, Katy and Sharon . Story stimulus: challenge to create a story with audience participation.
- *The Apple*, Hillside School P5-7 class session – a collaborative story with very successful audience participation created during the first

class session and performed for an audience of younger children during the third class session. Tellers: Philip, Scott and Keith . Story stimulus: challenge to create a story with audience participation.

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The five stories were particularly useful for analysis as they show a number of contrasts: in the success or otherwise of the story; in the success or otherwise of the collaboration; between the two contexts; in the participating children’s experience of storytelling. In both contexts, the Dale School storytelling club and the Hillside School class, it was possible to trace the development of stories through children’s collaborative work, over a period of time. *The Door in the Hill* (Dale School storytelling club), *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo* (both Hillside School P5-7 class) were all shaped towards a performance for others, not only for club members or class, through a process of evaluation and improvement by the children involved, supported by myself. Thus consideration of *The Noonoo*, *The Apple* and *The Door in the Hill* allowed comparison across the two contexts. Comparison of *The Snake in the Box* and *The Light Sabre in the Box* with *The Door in the Hill* (all Dale School storytelling club) allowed comparisons of the same children, working in different groupings and also showing progression over time, as the first two of these stories were created in session four and the third was created in session seven.

3.12 The children

Information about the children involved in creating and performing these stories is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of information about children

Child	School	Stage	Age	Sessions when Present	Stories
Jessica	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	<i>The Snake in the Box</i> <i>The Door in the Hill</i>

David	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9	<i>The Light Sabre in the Box</i> <i>The Door in the Hill</i>
Paul	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	<i>The Door in the Hill</i>
Kelly	Dale	P4	8	3, 4, 6	<i>The Light Sabre in the Box</i>
Jason	Dale	P3	7	2, 3, 4, 6,	<i>The Snake in the Box</i>
Angus	Dale	P3	7	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9	None of selected stories
John	Hillside	P7	12	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Katie	Hillside	P7	12	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Sharon	Hillside	P7	11	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Keith	Hillside	P5	9	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>
Phillip	Hillside	P6	10	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>
Scott	Hillside	P6	11	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>

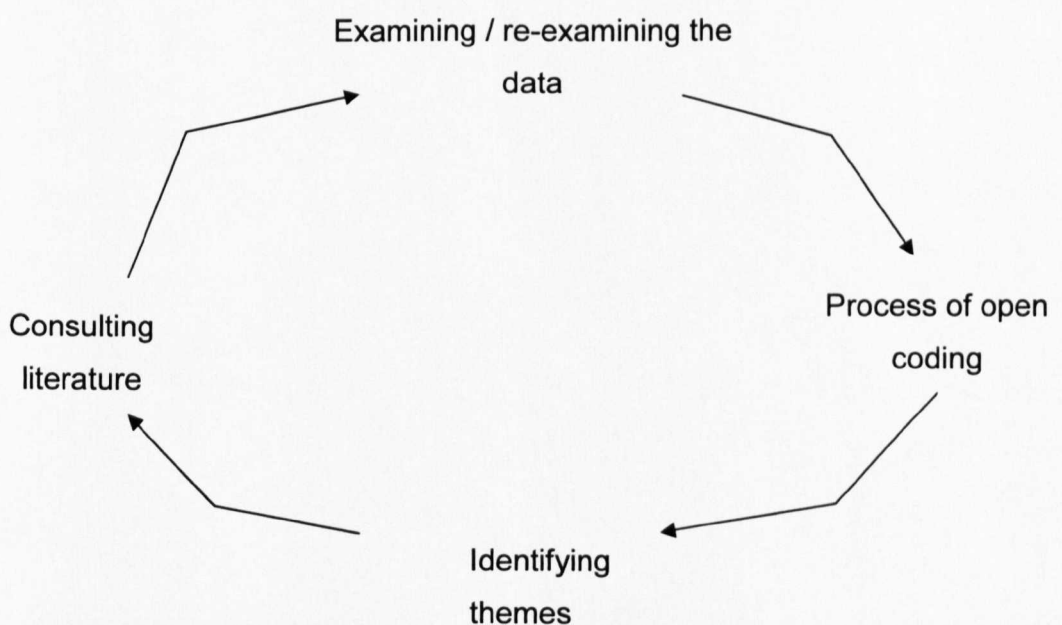
3.13 Analysis

The work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and others who have more recently developed their ideas on grounded theory have provided a starting point for developing the analysis of data for my study. For Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003:150), grounded theory is a 'way of generating theory (or even more generically, a way of generating ideas on the basis of empirical research).' The development of grounded theory from data begins with the process of 'open coding'. The data is examined section by section, phrase by phrase and temporary labels are attached. Analysis begins as soon as there is data to analyse as the process of coding can be started with small quantities of data. The next stage of the coding process involves not random sampling of the data but theoretical sampling, where there is a deliberate search for data which will throw light on the emergent analysis. Codes which persist through this process of analysis become recognised as categories, which will be integrated into the theoretical analysis.

Clarke's (2005) development of grounded theory, which she terms situational analysis, was particularly useful. This develops grounded theory to include a 'situation-centred approach that in addition to studying action, also explicitly includes the analysis of the full situation, including discourses' (2005:xxxii). Clarke uses a process of mapping to record the themes emerging from the analysis. A similar process was used in analysing the data in this study, this mapping being from the data to the context and also to the analytical frameworks being considered. However, where my own approach differed from Clarke's was in the use of literature to inform the process. The use of literature assisted the process of moving from random sampling to theoretical sampling and the use of literature from a variety of disciplines opened up possibilities for understanding the data through a series of different lenses,

Analysing the data was an iterative process, involving examining the data, using a process of open coding to identify themes and skills, consulting relevant literature and then returning to the data to repeat the process again and again. As the process of analysis proceeded the analytical frameworks became clearer. Analytical frameworks were developed from the data through the interaction of my reflection on the themes identified by the process of open coding with the insights gained from the literature.

Diagram 1 The process of analysis



In using the process of open coding (Clarke, 2005), it was at first difficult to identify themes, but as more data was analysed, these themes began to emerge from the process. As the process of analysis proceeded the analytical frameworks became clearer.

Because this study looks at the process of children's collaborative story-making, the stories created and the story performances, it was necessary to use a variety of analytical frameworks, adopted from relevant disciplines, discussed in Chapter Two. The analytical frameworks are discussed in more detail in Chapters Four and Five. Analysis of the process of the talk involved in the children's collaborative story-making was based on the work of Gee (1999), Mercer et al (1999), Rogoff (1990) and Maybin (2006). Analysis of the stories was based on narrative analysis frameworks offered by Bettelheim (1991), Martin (1997), Propp (1968) and Toolan (2001, 2006) and analysis of the story performances was based on performance analysis frameworks offered by Swann (2009), Bauman (1986), Thornborrow and Coates, (2005). The children's own evaluation of their work provided an important element to the process of analysis. For example, the children's own definitions of a successful story were used in evaluating the stories.

3.14 Conclusions

This section is still to be written.

Chapter Four

Analysis of the process of collaborative storytelling

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the first research question, 'What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' It focuses on analysis of the process by which children work collaboratively together to produce an oral story. Chapter Three included an account of the data collected, an account of the data selected for analysis and the reasons for that selection. The current chapter includes an account of the relevance of this data to the first research question and brief pen portraits of some of the children involved. Chapter Three also contained an account of the process of 'open coding' (Clarke, 2005) which was used to develop the grounded theory underpinning the analysis and to identify the skills involved in the process of collaborative storytelling. In the current chapter, I will discuss themes emerging from the analysis in relation to the first research question. Underlying themes, discussed in Chapter 2, are the concepts of socially constructed learning and of legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice of storytelling. Skills identified by the analysis are:

- the importance of previous experience of storytelling
- the development of collaborative skills
- understanding the ground rules
- listening and building on previous contributions
- turn-taking and handing on the turn
- memorising
- the use of different types of talk in different contexts
- the development of co-creative talk
- children's evaluation of their work

The process by which these skills were identified is discussed in section 4.5. The final section will consider the conclusions to be drawn from this analysis.

4.2 Socially constructed learning and socially situated performance

As discussed in Chapter 2, socially constructed learning provides the theoretical framework on which my analysis is based, but it also emerged as a theme in analysis of the process of collaborative story making. All the collaborative story telling activities that constitute the data for this study, whether involving discussion, creation or performance of stories, are situated within specific social contexts, the Dale School after-school storytelling club or the Hillside School classes. My own role in these contexts was discussed in Chapter Three. Children's legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice of storytelling, concepts discussed in Chapter 2, allowed them to develop the skills identified in this and the following chapter. Opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation were: participation as listeners in every club or class session, contributing to the development of stories (e.g Appendix N, D10-12) and joining in with responses (Appendix N, D31. 35.36). Children were also asked to help to evaluate stories, performances and their own developing collaborative skills (see Appendix N, D12, D15, H6, H9)

Recent studies of creativity by Craft, (2005) Leach (2001) and others (discussed in Chapter Two) have put forward the view that creative learning is always social, always interpsychological, suggesting that within communities of practice where creativity is valued, creativity will be highly developed. The two contexts for this study allowed children to participate in a community of practice where creativity was valued and enjoyed. They were able to play with words (D18), with voices (D28-31) and with the plots of stories (D13-15) in a supportive group. Creative storytelling was modelled by myself and evaluated by children and myself in all sessions.

Learning is always dependent on previous skills and on the cultural capital that the learners bring to the experiences, but, as shown later in the current chapter, this learning was advanced by modelling, by discussion and by children's evaluation of their own learning. Gee (2004), emphasising the value of socially situated learning, argues that children learn very successfully by participating in a community of practice, without didactic instruction (see

discussion in Chapter Two Section 2.3). The communities of practice in the two contexts of this study involved children learning through participation with little didactic instruction (see Appendix N, D28, H9). Children in the Hillside School class already possessed skills in collaborative discussion and in performance. They learned to apply these skills to the context of oral storytelling. They moved quickly from peripheral participation as listeners or as listeners who contributed to the storytelling modelled by myself (Appendix N, H4-6), to full participation as collaborative storytellers, able to perform for an audience with little support (Appendix N, H13-17). The children in the Dale School storytelling club had less well-developed skills in collaborative discussion and in performance. Although they expressed their wish to listen to more stories rather than tell stories (Appendix N, D15) thereby maintaining their position as peripheral participants, they became comfortable with increasingly central participation in collaborative storytelling through activities such as joining in with responses (e.g. in *The Turtle of Koka* in session two and *The Enormous Turnip* in session eight) through completing stories begun by me (e.g. in sessions 4 and 7, Appendix N, D16-18, D25-28) and through activities such as telling a whole group story by contributing a short section each, without discussion.(e.g. in session 2, Appendix N, D10-12).

In comparing the session four data (Appendix N, D16-18, Appendices G and H) with the transcript from session seven, *The Door in the Hill* discussion (Appendix D), it can be seen that the Dale School children's collaborative skills had developed over previous sessions. In session four the children had difficulty in working together collaboratively. For example, Jessica could not persuade Jason to stop laughing and help to develop their story (Appendix N, D18); David seemed to want to instruct Kelly in the nature of Star Wars weapons rather than develop a collaborative story (Appendix N, D18). By session seven David, Jessica and Paul were listening to each other, building on each other's contributions and talking turns, as discussed in more detail in sections 4.7 and 4.8.

4.3 The contexts, the children and the data - relevance for answering research question 1

Chapter Three included an account of the data chosen for analysis, which focuses on five stories taken from the two different contexts, the Dale School after-school storytelling club and the sessions with the Hillside School P5-7 class. Brief pen portraits of the children involved in creating the stories were also provided in Section 3.12. The current section considers the relevance of the data for answering the first research question, 'What skills are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?'

Firstly, were these successful stories, which might be expected to offer evidence of the children's developing skills in creative collaboration? The data selected for analysis consists of five collaborative stories. Two of these (*The Last Noonoo* and *The Apple*) were from the Hillside School P5-7 class. Here three storytelling sessions culminated in a performance for a younger class. Previous experience of teaching this class (see Appendix N, H1) had shown me that all the children were able to create and perform a successful collaborative story, so an additional challenge was introduced and children were asked to create stories which involved participation by the P1/2 class who would be their audience. Although both of these stories were considered to be successful as stories and as story performances, according to the children's own criteria (see section 4.11), there were clear contrasts in the collaborative work of the children in creating them, making these stories very useful in addressing the first research question. Both discussion and performance of *The Last Noonoo* were dominated by John (12). Sharon (11) and Katy (12) (all P7) were content to take peripheral roles (see Appendix N, H7-9). So when the class considered the process of collaborative storytelling, asking, 'How well did they work as a team?' (Appendix N, H6), theirs was the least successful story-making group in this session. Phillip (P6, 10 years), Scott (P6, 11 years) and Keith (P5, 9 years) were very successful in working collaboratively on *The Apple*, at the discussion stage, where they listened to each other's ideas and all three contributed successfully, in the performance for their own class and also in the performance for the P1/2 class, where they

achieved a routine of turn-taking and were also able to respond to audience contributions to produce a collaborative performance which involved their audience in shaping the story (e.g. Appendix J, turns 2-14).

The three stories from the Dale School storytelling club selected for analysis also provided useful contrasts for addressing the first research question and offering insights into the process of creating collaborative oral stories. *The Door in the Hill* was particularly successful, both as a story and as a story performance. It was also successful in terms of the group collaboration which produced it, which is of relevance to the discussion in the current chapter. The collaborative process of the creation and performance of *The Door in the Hill* had three distinct stages. These were:

1. creation of the story
2. memorising and recall
3. performing the story

Although these stages might be expected to correspond to the two club sessions and the final performance, there is in fact considerable overlap between them, showing the iterative nature of the process of creating a collaborative story. The story was first created in the seventh club session, as this was when it was discussed and first performed by the children. However, in the subsequent sessions and in the final performance the story was recreated. As will be seen in Chapter Five, children involved in creating a collaborative story will regularly perform small sections for the rest of their group as part of the creative and negotiative process of collaborative story-making. With each there were differences as details were added, subtracted or altered. Integral to the process of creating a collaborative oral story for performance are the skills of memorising and recall, which can be seen developing in the Dale children's work. The initial stages of memorising and recall of the story began in session seven when the children followed up their discussion of the plot with their first performance of the story for others. It became more focussed at the end of session seven when we discussed performing the story for an audience and the children and I worked together

as a group to reduce the story to its 'bare bones'(Appendix E). In session eight the children worked on recall of their story, but also performed it for another child who had been absent from the previous session. Before the performance to family and friends, children spent five minutes agreeing on their recall of the story. The rich data available from these sessions (Appendices A-E and Appendix N, D25-34) was valuable for analysis of the children's developing skills of memorising and recall.

In order to support the analysis of the development of skills over time and thus to identify skills involved in the process of creating collaborative stories, two short stories from session four of the Dale School storytelling club were also analysed to provide contrast with the successful story, *'The Door in the Hill'*. These earlier stories were *'The Snake in the Box'*, (see Appendix G) created by Jessica (P4, 8 years) and Jason (P3, 7 years) and *'The Light Sabre in the Box'*, (see Appendix H). created by two P4 children, David (8 years) and Kelly (8 years). Jessica and David were both involved in the successful story, *The Door in the Hill*, but in *The Snake in the Box* and *The Light Sabre in the Box* we see them at an earlier stage in their development as collaborative storytellers. We also see them each paired with a child whose collaborative storytelling skills were less developed than their own. As noted in Chapter Two, (section 2.2) each child brought different cultural capital to their storytelling experiences. During the planning discussion of *The Snake in the Box* (Appendix N, D18) Jason could be heard squealing with laughter about the snake while Jessica tried unsuccessfully to develop the story further. During the planning discussion of *The Light Sabre in the Box*, Kelly's contributions to discussion seemed to be of one sentence or sentence fragment, while David's contributions were generally several sentences long. David explained to Kelly what a light sabre is, though he did not seem to relate the light sabre to its source in the Star Wars movies, but rather spoke about it as if were part of everyday knowledge with which Kelly should be familiar (Appendix H, turn 2) Here again, we see that their cultural capital was different. In earlier sessions of the storytelling club collaborative story-making was limited by the lack of skills of all participants (D15). By session seven Jessica, David and Paul had significantly developed their collaborative

discussion skills (see Appendix D) and were also able to create a successful collaborative story (see Appendix A), making this data valuable for gaining insight into the skills that are involved in the process of creating collaborative oral stories.

4.4 Previous experience of storytelling, story writing and collaborative working

The skills which children used in discussing, creating and performing their collaborative stories were built on the skills that they brought to the sessions from their previous experience. In the class and after-school club contexts, these skills and previous experience were distinctly different. At the time that collection of data for this study was begun, the P3 and P4 pupils in the Dale School storytelling club had limited experience of oral storytelling. Research journal notes (D1).on selection of these classes for the collection of data indicate that each class had enjoyed a session on storytelling involving audience participation and some class discussion. However, when asked to give titles of stories in the first session of the storytelling club, the six children present found the task difficult and together produced nine titles (Appendix N, D9). By the third session, having had more experience of listening to and discussing stories, the children were able to name 31 stories and also to classify these as stories in books (e.g. Harry Potter) or stories they had heard (e.g The Turtle of Koka). Discussion with the P3 and P4 class teachers during the first two weeks of the club indicated that these children's skills in story-writing were developing and they were working towards either Level A or Level B of Scottish 5-14 Guidelines on writing. This would be at or below the level expected for their stages. Typical written stories from these children would range from a few linked sentences to a page of writing with some recognisable structure. Reading skills were limited to reading aloud and literal comprehension (Appendix N, D7).

Children in the Hillside School P5-7 composite class were older and had more experience of reading and writing stories. They were working towards 5-14 Level D, E or F in writing (Appendix N, H2). This would be above the level expected for their stages. At the beginning of their storytelling work with me,

typical written stories from these children would consist of several pages of well-structured narrative (Appendix N, H1). As a class they were able to give titles of stories they knew for five minutes without any suggestion that they would run out of ideas (Appendix N, H6). The head teacher considered that, in reading, they were able to go beyond the literal comprehension and draw inferences from the text (Appendix N, H1). This matched my own knowledge of teaching reading in the class (Appendix N, H1). Some of the differences in experience of literacy and oral storytelling between the children in the two schools would be due to the children's family backgrounds. Hillside School served a mainly middle class catchment area (Appendix N, H1). Dale School served a less prosperous area (Appendix N, D3). Children in the P3 - 4 composite class at Hillside School (Appendix N, H10 -12) showed better developed skills in collaborative storytelling than the P3 and P4 children in the Dale School storytelling club in the early sessions of the club (Appendix N, H10 -12),

In this study, general literacy levels seem to be related to children's skills in collaborative storytelling, but even in this small study there are anomalies. For instance, in the Dale School P4 class, David and Paul were judged by their class teacher to be considerably more skilled at writing stories than Jessica (Appendix N, D7) although within the club, Jessica was considered by the other children and myself to be a good storyteller (Appendix N, D12) and we can see from the transcripts that she contributes effectively to discussion and to collaborative storytelling (Appendices A and D). In the Hillside School P5-7 class, Katy's general literacy skills were judged by the head teacher to be greater than John's (Appendix N, H2). However, the children and I all considered that John's personal skills in oral storytelling were very well-developed (Appendix N, H9). So it would seem that general literacy skills do not translate directly into skills in collaborative storytelling.

The experience of working collaboratively was also very different for the two groups of children. The Hillside P5-7 children were older than the Dale children and had more experience of collaborative group work than the P3 and P4 children at Dale School Storytelling club. The Dale School P3 and P4

children had some experience of working collaboratively in groups in their own classes (Appendix N, D7) but no experience in working collaboratively with children from the other class. In Hillside School, collaborative group work was undertaken on a daily basis and pupils from the P5-7 class regularly worked collaboratively in mixed-stage groups (Appendix N, H1 and H2). Children from the Hillside School P3-4 class regularly in a collaborative way.

Children's previous experience of collaborative group work facilitates their ability to create successful collaborative stories. For example, we will see in section 4.10 that the Hillside School P5-7 class more readily produced lists of ground rules for talking in groups than the Dale children (for example, compare Appendix N, D9 and H6). They were also able to evaluate their own group work, making use of these ground rules (e.g Appendix N, H9). These children were familiar with collaborative group work and worked willingly with others (Appendix N, H1 and 2). In contrast, I felt that the Dale School storytelling club children's difficulties in undertaking collaborative group work slowed down their progress in creating collaborative stories (e.g. D10 -12). However, there are anomalies here too. Jessica, in the Dale club, consistently listened to others in groups and by session seven was contributing effectively in a group, with a strong awareness of the need for turn taking (see Appendix A turns 1-10, Appendix B comment 11, Appendix C 1-31). John, Katy and Sharon, in Hillside School P5-7, on the other hand, who had far more experience than Jessica of collaborative group work, although not of collaborative storytelling, produced a storytelling performance which was dominated by John (see Appendix I, turns 2-17).

4.5 Developing collaborative skills

Children who attended the Dale School storytelling club were taught in single stage classes and in the club they did not relate readily to children who were not in their own class (see Appendix N, D21). The two girls in the club, Jessica and Kelly, (both P4) initially preferred to work with each other, although Kelly only attended two sessions (Appendix N, D9 and D18). However, by the seventh session of the club Jessica was working confidently with David and Paul and the transcript of their initial discussion of *The Door in*

the Hill shows that she was asserting her views and able to challenge the boys.

52 Jessica I don't think she should turn into an emu.

53 David They're birds. They're big fat...they're not fat...I cant say they're fat,}

54 Jessica I mean, but}

55 David but they're fluffy.

56 Jessica But they don't fly

(Appendix C)

The children's involvement in the process of creating the story was evident in the video data for session 7 (Appendix B, comments 5. 12. 13. 14. 16) from their enthusiastic and excited tone of voice, their leaning towards each other and their frequent use of mime and gesture as they put forward their ideas. There was evidence that the children collaborated successfully together to produce their story, with each of the three children being actively involved in this process (e.g. Appendix C, turns 26-46). When telling the story, immediately after this discussion, they collaborated to create their performance by sharing out the tasks, listening to each other and maintaining the continuity of the story (see Appendix A, turns 1, 7 and 18). This data clearly indicates Jessica's increased confidence in working collaboratively, particularly with boys who were not part of her regular circle of friends. The same data indicates the development of collaborative skills by Paul and David.

In session 1 of the Dale club, Paul and Angus' mothers both expressed concern about their children's lack of confidence (Appendix N, D9), During session 2, although he and David both contributed ideas to the groups story-making, Paul said that he was not confident about storytelling (Appendix N, D12). However, by session 7 he was confidently discussing with Jessica and

David (Appendix C, turns 1-24 and 32-34). He also told the final section of the story, adding his own ending (Appendix A, turns 13-20). David might have been considered over-confident in the early sessions of the club. His mother hoped that he would learn to listen to others (Appendix N, D12). In paired discussion during session 2, he was unable to let his partner, Paul, share the turns (Appendix N, D9).

Children at Hillside School were taught in small multi-stage composite classes and in the playground mixed with children from the two younger classes as well as from their own class (Appendix N, H1). Perhaps because of the small numbers of children at each stage, (for example John was the only boy in P7), boys and girls were comfortable working together. This is demonstrated in *The Last Noonoo* (Appendix I, turn 1) where John, Katy and Sharon happily sang together in an improvised musical introduction to their story.

Children at Hillside school were familiar with the concept of ground rules and, when working as a supply teacher in their class, I had asked them to consider their ground rules for talking and listening (Appendix N, H1), Mercer et al found in their studies of children's collaborative talk (discussed in Chapter Two) that it was essential to develop ground rules for discussion, preferably with the children themselves, when working to develop children's ability to think and discuss rationally (Dawes, Wegeriff and Mercer, 1999).

However, in the Dale School storytelling club, children's understanding and familiarity with the agreed ground rules built up gradually over the sessions. The idea of ground rules was introduced in session two (Appendix N, D12) and by session four the agreed ground rules were:

- Look at the person who is speaking
- Listen to the person who is speaking
- Take turns

(Appendix N, D18). These ground rules were used both for discussion and performance.

In session four, during the telling of *The Light Sabre in the Box*, David and Kelly had difficulty in following these ground rules. In Appendix H, turns 4 and 6, David failed to let Kelly take her agreed turn and interrupted her. Kelly did not look at David when he was speaking (Appendix N, D18). Kelly's contribution in turn 3 suggests that she did not listen to the second part of David's contribution. Jason and Jessica broke the flow of their short story with a long pause while they negotiated their turn-taking (Appendix G, line 2). Jason does not seem to have listened to Jessica in the telling of this story, as he follows her 'the snake went to the door' with 'The snake jumped out the window'. He did not listen to Jessica at the discussion stage of this story, when he was laughing loudly at something that she did not appear to find funny (Appendix N, D18). However, Jessica listened to Jason's 'the snake ... ran away' and changed this to 'slithered away' (Appendix G, turns 4-5).

However by session seven of the storytelling club, the effective use of these ground rules was apparent in the video and audio recordings of the children planning the *Door in the Hill* story (see Appendix B, introductory paragraph). The video data from Appendix B, (e.g. comments 1, 3, 7, 9) shows that during the planning discussion the three children sat facing each other; they consistently looked at the person speaking ; they shared the talk between them. The strategies of introducing ground rules and involving children in drawing up and agreeing on these ground rules (Appendix N, D9, H6) (see Dawes, Wegeriff and Mercer, 1999) were effective in developing the children's skills in collaborative oral storytelling.

Children in the Hillside School P5-7 class were familiar with the idea of ground rules for talking and listening and needed little support to list them. These ground rules (agreed by the children in the first session) were:

- Talk clearly
- Eye contact
- Don't fidget
- Don't interrupt

They were also able to adapt and develop these ground rules. Taking into account the requirements of the storytelling tasks they were asked to undertake, in session 2 they developed ground rules for tellers and for audience H6). Their agreed ground rules for storytelling performers at this point were:

- Talk clearly
- Make sure everyone can hear
- Be enthusiastic
- Try to use different pitches in your voice
- Use different voices for different people or animals
- Know what you are talking about
- Don't be boring
- Be confident
- Make eye contact with your audience

This list relates closely to the skills discussed by writers on storytelling performance (see discussion of Bauman, 1986, Swann, 2009 in Chapter Two). They provided a resource for analysis of skills in this study.

By the fifth session, children in the Dale School storytelling club were familiar enough with the practice of storytelling to be able to draw up ground rules for audiences (D21). These were:

- Look at the person who is speaking
- Listen to the person who is speaking
- Don't interrupt

These were adapted from the group's ground rules for talking and listening, with the third ground rule being changed from 'take turns' to 'don't interrupt', showing that they recognised that an audience's role was both similar to and different from the role of a conversationalist.

Hillside P5-7 ground rules for audiences were:

- Don't fidget
- Don't interrupt
- At least pretend that you're enjoying the story
- Pay attention
- Look at the teller

The first two rules are also direct quotes from the group's rules for talking and listening, while the third rule suggests a more sophisticated awareness that the role of audience is also a performance.

4.7 Turn taking

Interruption was seen by children in both contexts as unhelpful to the smooth flow of talk. To create a story collaboratively, children need to be adept at turn-taking and passing on the turn to others (Graddol, Cheshire and Swann, 1994). Collaborative talk requires participants to recognise when they are being invited to take a turn and when they should hand the turn on to someone else. Children in both contexts were asked to 'share the telling of the story' amongst the group members (D9, H6) but some groups understood this to mean share equally; other groups were happy with unequal sharing.

In Dale story-telling club session four, Jessica expressed the view that people were not taking turns and there was some discussion about how to deal with this (D18). To scaffold the learning of the skill of turn taking, a special object, in this case a large shell, was introduced in session five (D19 – 21). This special object is either passed around the circle or placed in the centre of the circle so that anyone can pick it up. It gives permission to speak to the person who is holding it and all others, including the teacher, should listen to the person holding the special object. The P4 children said that they had used a special object in this way in class Circle Times (see also Moseley, 1996).

In discussion, the main problems with turn taking were of interruption. (See, for example lines 50 and 51 or 53 and 54 in Appendix C.) In the telling of collaborative stories, the problems were more often of gaps between turns, with one child wanting to hand over the turn and another child not being ready

to accept it. For example, Jessica was unwilling to accept the turn from Jason, in the telling of *The Snake in the Box* (Appendix G, turn 2), perhaps because Jason had neither finished his sentence nor given any other cue that his turn was finished.

In earlier sessions of the storytelling club David seemed to find it difficult to allow other children (particularly Kelly and Jessica) to take their turn. This can be seen in the way he interrupted and corrected Kelly in session four (see Appendix H, turns 4 and 6). By session seven there is some change in this behaviour from David and he is able to follow Jessica's lead and pass the turn to others.

43 Jessica But her broomstick, 'cos she didn't go as fast as she did before.
What do you think, Paul? Do you think that she
...}

44 David What do you think? Do you think she should turn }
into an osprey or something like that?

Appendix C.

He also takes turns with Jessica and Paul in a very productive interchange, listening to and recognising the value of Jessica's suggestion that the witch should transform into the mother (turn 36), asking a question which both builds on Jessica's idea and takes the story forward significantly (turn 38), before eventually adding his own idea (turn 40).

33 David Mm. I don't think so} They could keep on running till they get to
the house and the she goes 'Aww, I cant get them in there',
then she, like, magics herself into ...

34 Paul a bee... }

35 Jessica Their mother} (*Laughter*). What if she turns herself into their
mother and try and trick them. David, what about if she turns

into their mother

36 David Go!

37 Jessica and is like 'go back to the house that you went to'.

38 David But how would their mum know?

39 Jessica She would ask them first what happened and then tell them to go back to the house and...

40 David And then the witch transforms into a buzzard...

(Appendix C)

This example will be discussed further in section 4.10 and 4.12 as it illustrates the development in all three children of the ability to do more than simply take turns, but to use those turns productively in collaborative creative talk.

In the Hillside School P5-7 class, Phillip, Scott and Keith were skilled at turn-taking, both in the discussion and in the performance of their story, handing on the turns to each other by use of a look and inflection and in addition by using the names of audience members so that there was never any doubt when audience contributions were invited at particular points (Appendix J, turns 6-14). On the other hand, John spoke for considerably more of the time than Katy or Sharon in both discussion and performance. In the initial performance of this story for their own class, John performed and Katy and Sharon did very little and that this was commented on in the feedback from the other children in the class (Appendix N, H9). In the performance for P1-2, there was some involvement of the two girls, but the telling was still dominated by John. John had 36 individual turns and Katy and Sharon had two turns and one turn respectively. The three children had 5 turns speaking in unison. On one occasion John forgot that they had agreed on a contribution from the girls until reminded by a look from Katy.

17 John Yes. He loved his dummies*. And *every year since he was five* his mum and dad said...(look from Katy) ... his gran said ...

18 Katy You've to get rid of those noonnoos once and for all.

(Appendix I)

Interestingly, a large section of this story performance consisted of a (unequal) dialogue between John and members of the audience, with audience members having a total of 19 individual turns (Appendix I). In this interchange, John was clearly in control, asking for and receiving enthusiastic contributions from members of the audience, listening to their

In the Hillside School P5-7 class storytelling sessions, turn-taking seemed more spontaneous and generally occurred more smoothly. Some of the verbal and non-verbal cues facilitating turn-exchange identified by Graddol, Cheshire and Swann (1994) were observed (see discussion in Chapter 2, section 2.7). The children in both Hillside School classes were noticeably more comfortable with group discussion and with performing in front of others than the Dale School storytelling club children. Group discussion was a regular feature of their class activities and as the oldest children in a small school they were expected to perform in front of others on a regular basis. It seems likely that their familiarity with the activities made it easier for them to hand over turns without problems. There did not seem to be a particular development over time in this context.

4.8 Listening to and building on previous contributions

In order to produce successful collaborative stories, the children had to work together to create a plot, around their chosen characters. For the story to maintain internal consistency and coherence, children had to listen to each other's contributions. In session four of the Dale School storytelling club children were still finding it difficult to listen to each other and to build on each other's contributions and stories did not maintain internal consistency. David and Kelly found it particularly difficult to listen to each other's contributions in their story about *The Light Sabre in the Box*.

- 2 David Well, they open the box and there is a light-sabre, which is a sword technically which is light but it can cut through anything and a chicken head cos ... emm ..

A terrorist lived in the house and there was these police that were looking for them. And they bashed into the house and said *hands up*... to the wee boy and girl, but we don't know what their names are so we're just going to call them boy and girl

And so they said hands up and they put their hands up (.....) and the police said hands up then (.....) the boy And he shot with his gun, but it missed and it bounced into the cooking pot that was in the open oven

(.....)

- 3 Kelly And this man was the person who had the chicken head and the light sabre and the sword.

(Appendix H)

Kelly has remembered the details of the chicken head and the light sabre but she doesn't notice David's final detail about the shot missing and bouncing into the cooking pot. Neither does she realise that David's reference to a sword is part of his explanation of a light sabre, not an additional object David's listening to Kelly seems to be confined to listening to her mistakes, which he then attempts to correct.

- 3 Kelly ... And the light saver

- 4 David Sabre.

(Appendix H)

At the discussion stage, Research Journal notes indicate that David spent a large proportion of the time explaining technical terms such as light sabre to Kelly (Appendix N, D18). During this same discussion time, Jason was highly amused by the idea of a snake being in the box and during his discussion with Jessica he laughed frequently. Neither of these pairs of children appeared to

be listening well to each other's contributions to the discussion (Appendix N, D18). although Jessica appeared to be trying to listen to and develop Jason's snake idea . This can be seen in her determination to use an appropriate word, 'slithered'.

4 Jason Then the snake jumped out the window (*laughs*) ... and ran away.

5 Jessica Slithered away.

(Appendix G, line 5)

However, by session 7, we have many examples of the Dale children listening to and building on each other's contributions, for example

56 Jessica But they don't fly

57 David They don't fly but they run fast that's the thing

Appendix C

In the Hillside School P5-7 class, Phillip, Scott and Keith's responses to audience contributions provided successful examples of building on previous contributions (see for example Appendix J, turns 17-22) In the Dale School club discussion to plan *The Door in the Hill*, Jessica and Paul listened to each other and built on previous contributions.

12 Jessica They escaped.

13 Paul Somehow.

14 Jessica Somehow, because she might have closed the door with her magic.

15 Paul They found a shovel, dug and dug up.

16 Jessica But they wouldn't have enough time

17 Paul They could dig as fast as they could and the dog would help too.

18 Jessica What about the cat?

19 Paul It'd get all mucky.

20 Jessica Well, they could ... They found like a magic door....

(Appendix C)

Jessica and Paul were involved in a lively and constructive dialogue here (see discussion of Maybin's concept of dialogicality in Chapter 2, section 2.5). At times they asked each other's opinion (see, for example, Appendix C, turn 10). Their involvement in the process of creating the story is evident in their enthusiastic and excited tone of voice, their leaning towards each other and their frequent use of mime and gesture as they put forward their ideas, but in spite of their excitement, they were still able to listen to each other and build on each other's contribution (see, for example Appendix C, turns 1-6).

However, *The Door in the Hill* discussion changed when David returned. As we have seen, during the first part of the discussion Paul and Jessica contributed fairly equally to the discussion and were able to build on each other's contributions. On David's return (turn 44) it was Jessica who summarised the previous discussion for him (Appendix C, turns 26 and 28). However, soon afterwards, the talk turned to a discussion of birds (an area where David and Paul had some knowledge) and a number of Jessica's contributions were ignored.

31 Jessica Yeah}, but that's kind of ... going ... but that's kind of going home.

32 Paul Shall we make it ...}

33 David Mm. I don't think so}

(Appendix C)

and

43 Jessica ... What do you think, Paul? Do you think that she ...}

44 David What do you think? Do you think she should turn }
into an osprey or something like that?

45 Jessica Or do you think that...}

46 Paul Depends.... if a peregrine falcon's}
the fastest bird in the world

(Appendix C)

Jessica had confidence in her own ability to make useful contributions, perhaps because of her successful dialogue with Paul at the beginning of the discussion (Appendix C, turns 1-24) and she persisted with her contributions, eventually offering a way into a solution to the problem. This is a development from her reluctance to collaborate in groups in sessions one to three (Appendix N, D9, D12, D15). She addressed David specifically in lines 66 and 68. David in an example of latching which contributed successfully to the development of the story, responded to Jessica's mime and completed her sentence in turn 69.

66 Jessica But , David}

67 Paul We can make it up cos there's rocks there

68 Jessica David, say it turns not into an emu but (*mimes*)

69 David The fastest bird in the world. A peregrine falcon

(Appendix C)

At this point David recognised the value of Jessica's contribution. A little later he listened to and accepted a direct challenge from Jessica, modifying his idea in response to it (turn 81). He was valuing and acting on a contribution from Jessica

79 David She could put the dog in a kennel which is guarded with security, with machine guns and lasers.

80 Jessica That wouldn't fit in

81 David Alright a pokey wee jail ...

(Appendix C)

David can be seen to be developing the skills of listening to and building on previous contributions that he lacked in his earlier collaborative storytelling with Kelly. These were the skills that David's mother had hoped he would develop through the storytelling club (D12) and these seem to be skills which contribute successfully to the children's ability to create a collaborative story. When telling the story, immediately after this discussion, the three children collaborated to create their performance by sharing out the tasks, listening to each other and maintaining the continuity of the story (see Appendix A, turns 16-18).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Maybin analyses the dialogic structure of children's talk, finding evidence of subtle interweaving of utterances, each utterance referring backwards to previous utterances and forward towards an audience (2006:23). This interweaving of utterances is very evident in the children's collaborative story making. For example, at the beginning of *The Door in the Hill* discussion, (see Appendix C lines 1-7), Paul's utterance 'and

dog pie' relates backward to 'soup' and forward to 'And cat' and to 'cat pudding'. His 'and then the cat would be the dessert' relates backward to 'Cat pudding' and to

5 Paul ... Dog pie would be ... like a starter, and then children soup would be .. (*laughs*) the main course and then ..

(Appendix C)

It relates more obviously back to Jessica's 'Cat dessert', which Paul accepts as an improvement on 'cat pudding'. This utterance of Paul's can also be understood in the light of Bakhtin's thinking as relating forward to the imaginary audience who will be amused by this idea of the witch's three-course menu and by the suggestion that the witch is rather posh and eats dessert rather than pudding.

4.9 Memorising

Memorising is one of the skills of the oral storyteller. Storytelling manuals often devote large sections to ways to develop this skill (Lipman, 1999, MacDonald, 1993). Memorising is likely to be a transferable skill which is useful in many curricular areas and in life. For Bartlett (1967) remembering is a social act, an active process of reconstruction and this process can be recognised among the developing skills of the children in this study. Initially, the children at the Dale School storytelling club found it difficult to remember stories from one week to the next. For instance, they found it difficult to remember the traditional tale, *Daft Jack*, even though they had heard it twice (Appendix N, D21). However, longer and more complex stories created by the children themselves (e.g. *The Door in the Hill*, *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo*,) were all remembered over a period of at least two weeks. Jessica, Paul and David worked with me to identify the 'bare bones' (the essential elements) of *The Door in the Hill* (Appendix D). I scribed these for them and gave them a copy in session nine before they retold their story. This allowed us all to recall the structure of the story before retelling, although in this retelling in session nine, they missed out a large part of the story until I

scaffolded their reconstruction by reminding them of the agreed structure (Appendix N, D34).

For these three children it was a big achievement to remember a story as long and complex as *The Door in the Hill* and scaffolding techniques were needed to support their memorising and recall. The three children themselves made the decision to divide the story into three sections and to tell one section each. This made it easier for them to memorise the story. Perhaps the use of familiar motifs and themes was an additional factor in helping the children to recall this particular story (see discussion of Propp's functions in Chapter Five). For the performances (D35, D36), Jessica, Paul and David were able to remember the overall structure of *The Door in the Hill* and none of the three deviated significantly from this structure. At times in the development of the story, details were added which did not feature in the earlier discussions and performances but these did not detract from the original structure. For example, in the first telling of *The Door in the Hill* in session seven, Jessica introduced the image of the cat and the dog running about everywhere (Appendix A, turn 3). This had not been mentioned in the previous discussion. David then developed this image of animals running about everywhere and used it to tell listeners more about the witch's powers.

11 David There was lots of animals, looking at them, wondering What are they doing? (*amazed tone*) Why are they running away? Why are they running away from that witch? That witch is nice to us. B-u-ut, the witch wasn't* being nice to them* she was just giving them tablets* to make them think* that she was being nice to them. She's not really (*aside*)

(Appendix A)

Older children in the Hillside School P5-7 class did not find it difficult to remember stories from week to week. Research journal notes show that not only were they able to remember their own group's story, but that they were

able to remember the stories of other groups and comment on the changes made to these in their evaluation (Appendix N, H13, H14, H17).

4.10 Using different types of talk in different contexts

Mercer describes three types of talk - cumulative, disputational and exploratory (Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999, Mercer, 2000) which are discussed in Chapter 2. Mercer et al studied children's talk in relation to scientific and rational problem-solving activities, where they found that cumulative and disputational talk interfered with children's ability to solve problems efficiently. For them, exploratory talk is the ideal, to be encouraged in pupils as it is essential for the development of logical-rational thinking. However, my own data suggests that, for a creative activity such as collaborative storytelling, the relative value of these types of talk may not be so clear-cut. There may be occasions where cumulative or disputational talk can help children to think creatively and develop their stories and there may be occasions where exploratory talk, as defined by Mercer et al, actually inhibits that creativity.

Exploratory talk (in Mercer's terms) was seldom used when children were planning their stories and cumulative talk was common (see Appendix C). This bears out the findings of my 2005 M Ed study. The early part of the discussion of *The Door in the Hill* between Paul and Jessica, provides examples of cumulative talk, with each of the children building on previous contributions, supporting each other rather than challenging each other. The exchange is characterised by a sense of excitement and engagement which could clearly be identified in the children's tones of voice in the audio recording and video evidence (Appendix B, Appendix N, D25-28).

- 1 Paul Maybe a witch... There's a witch in there. And she wants to turn them into soup. ... and dog pie.
- 2 Jessica And cat...
- 3 Paul Cat pudding?

4 Jessica OK.

5 Paul OK. Dog pie would be ... like a starter, and then children soup would be .. (*laughs*) the main course and then ..

6 Jessica Cat dessert.

7 Paul And then the cat would be the dessert

(Appendix C)

In line 1 we see Paul suggesting the idea that the witch would want to eat the children. He suggests that she would turn the children into soup. He then remembers the pets and adds 'and dog pie'. In line 2, Jessica builds on this idea by reminding him about the other pet – the cat. Paul immediately suggests cat pudding and in line 4 Jessica accepts this suggestion without question. She supports Paul with her 'OK'. In line 5, Paul echoes Jessica's OK and uses it as a springboard for developing a wider concept, no longer just thinking of the individual dishes that the witch might create, but imagining a whole meal. He laughs as he talks about this and his enthusiasm for the idea is apparent in the recording. In line 5 Paul is trying to sort out a way to structure the meal and he appears to be working with two different concepts. These seem to be the conventional menu order and the idea that a main course should be substantial. He clearly knows about the conventional menu formula of starter – main course – pudding/dessert and this was the order in which the dishes were suggested. However, in line 5 Paul suggests dog pie for the starter and children soup for the main course, perhaps because of the relative sizes of the dog and the children. It may be that Paul's laugh is a recognition that this is an unconventional menu. Again, Jessica does not question Paul's contribution, in spite of its unconventionality. Her contribution 'Cat dessert' uses the discourse of the formal menu and the recording suggests that she enjoyed the idea of cat pudding being transformed into something more up-market. This section of talk fits Mercer's definition of

cumulative talk. There is no questioning, no constructive criticism no logical reasoning, but the ideas build on previous contributions. Participants support and encourage each other through their dialogue. In particular Jessica supports Paul in his creative development of his initial idea about the witch eating the children. I would argue that this support helps to give Paul the confidence to take forward his idea and that this is an instance of cumulative talk being very productive. This talk is progressing the task of creating a collaborative story, confirming the findings of my earlier study (2005) where I found that cumulative talk could lead to the production of satisfactory stories.

The two children then move into what Mercer would term exploratory talk, with reasons being offered and causality being recognised.

15 Paul They found a shovel, dug and dug up.

16 Jessica But they wouldn't have enough time

17 Paul They could dig as fast as they could and the dog would help too.

18 Jessica What about the cat?

19 Paul It'd get all mucky.

(Appendix C).

In this exchange Jessica twice questions Paul's ideas. Her questions are logical and sensible, as are Paul's answers, but they do not advance the imaginative and creative process of creating the story. In line 15, Paul seems to be visualising digging a tunnel in two stages – firstly digging (downwards or straight?) and then upwards – presumably out towards the outside world and escape. This idea has the potential to advance the story that Paul and Jessica are creating. Jessica's exploratory questions can be seen as breaks in the process of creating this story as there is no advance in the story between lines 16 and 19.

In the next turn it is Jessica who has the new idea, which Paul supports in line 21. Again this is an example of cumulative talk and again this type of talk advances the story.

20 Jessica Well, they could ... They found like a magic door....

21 Paul Yeah,* And it's (*indistinguishable*) Let's go for that!

(Appendix C)

After David's return, there are examples of disputational talk, where the children appear to be arguing for the sake of arguing, rather than on the basis of logical reasoning. For example:

32 Paul Shall we make it ...}

33 David Mm. I don't think so} They could keep on running till they get to the house and the she goes 'Aww, I cant get them in there', then she, like, magics herself into ...

34 Paul a bee... }

35 Jessica Their mother}

(Appendix C)

Each of the children tries to assert their own opinion, without offering reasons. They are so keen for their own ideas to be heard that they talk over each other (see 32-3 and 43-5). However out of this fragment comes the idea that the witch should 'magic herself into ... their mother', which becomes an important element of the plot. We can see that, on this occasion, disputational talk clearly progresses the task of creating a collaborative story.

The discussion of birds which follows provides further examples of Mercer's exploratory talk, with questions asked (line48) and logical arguments being developed (line 51). Syntax includes use of 'if' and 'because' ('cos) clauses.

- 46 Paul Depends.... if a peregrine falcon's}
the fastest bird in the world
- 47 David Yeah. Peregrineor Emu?
- 48 Jessica What's a peregrine? And what's an emu?
- 49 David A peregrine falcon? It's the fastest bird in the world and it's one
of the biggest birds of prey.
- 50 Jessica OK so she turns into that }
- 51 David Or* ... either an emu}
'cos they actually run quite fast.

(Appendix C)

Interestingly, this section is really a digression and does not advance the development of the story that the children are working on. Turns 52-64 continue with the exploratory talk and do not take the plot further. So it would seem that, while the use of exploratory talk, as defined by Mercer, may be productive for the problem solving activities he focuses on in his research, it is not necessarily an important skill in collaborative storytelling. However, this exploratory talk eventually leads to more creative 'possibility thinking' (Craft) from David in turn 65, perhaps to provide an opportunity to move away from the exploratory discussion, where he probably knows he is incorrect in his statement in turn 61 and that Paul is correct in turn 64.

- 61 David It's not a peregrine falcon's habitat either
- 62 Paul It is.
- 63 David No, they live in fields and wee fieldy bits, things like that.

64 Paul They live in cliffs and hills.

65 David But that hill.... But, what is that hill? We don't know what that hill is like.}

David's new idea is taken up by Paul in turn 67. Jessica meanwhile tries to make her point in turn 66 and gets a hearing in turn 68

66 Jessica But , David}Overlap

67 Paul We can make it up cos there's rocks there Overlap

68 Jessica David, say it turns not into an emu but (*mimes*)
Overlap

69 David The fastest bird in the world. A peregrine falcon and then she goes arrg! But she's even faster than one. We can make it like she's even faster and she flies after them.

The next part of the discussion is again characterised by the excitement and 'flow' (Czikszenmihalyi, 1996) of children creating a story together. Perhaps the use of exploratory talk was valuable to the children in providing different perspectives on their developing story, to allow them to take a step back from the creative process and then return to it refreshed.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.5), Barnes (1976) provides a somewhat different account of exploratory talk from that of Mercer. Barnes describes an example of exploratory talk in an English class by secondary school pupils as 'disjointed and hesitant' and containing 'broken utterances (and) changes of direction' (2008). He sees this type of talk as productive and his account of exploratory talk is not Mercer's ideal of pupils discussing logically, asking each other's opinion and giving reasons but it is 'hesitant and incomplete'. It is exploring the unknown or partially known, 'part of the struggle to assign

meaning' (2008:6). For Barnes, exploratory talk is simply talk which explores and could presumably include talk that Mercer would categorise as cumulative or disputational. Perhaps because Barnes' context is youngsters discussing and interpreting texts, his broader concept of exploratory talk is more relevant to collaborative storytelling activities. For example, Appendix C (turns 1 – 7) quoted earlier with Jessica and Paul working out the witch's menu, which in Mercer's terminology would be classed as cumulative talk, would fit Barnes concept of exploratory talk.

Where Mercer et al contrast exploratory talk with two other (less successful) types of talk that occur in small group discussion, Barnes contrasts exploratory talk with just one other type, presentational talk, talk where 'the speaker's attention is primarily focused on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of the audience' (2008:6-7). As discussed in Chapter Two, Barnes sees this type of talk as also valuable for pupils because being more consciously aware of the needs of the listeners is an essential part of mature communication. In the transcripts of the children's performances we see many examples of this type of talk which will be discussed in the following chapter in the analysis of the children's performances of their collaborative stories.

During the process of discussing ground rules for storytelling, we see the Hillside School P5-7 class recognising for themselves the types of talk that are required in different contexts, as their rules for storytelling are different from their rules for audiences and from their general rules for talking and listening. The Dale School children did not articulate these ideas through ground rules in the same way. However, they made use of Barnes' two different styles of talk. For example, contrast the exploratory talk (Barnes) in Appendix C turns 70 – 74, when the group are creating their story, with the representational talk in Appendix A turns 3-5, 13-14 and 18-20, when they are performing their story.

In creating their collaborative story, the children perform short sections to each other, moving freely between exploratory and presentational talk. So,

using exploratory talk, the children make suggestions to each other. 'Maybe a witch ...' (Appendix C line 1, they seek clarification, 'It did work or it didn't?' (Appendix C, line 10 and they ask each other's opinions, 'What do you think?' (Appendix C, lines 43 and 44). The move between the two types of talk is often indicated by a change in the verb tense or mood e.g.

15 Paul They found a shovel, dug and dug up.

16 Jessica But they wouldn't have enough time

17 Paul They could dig as fast as they could and the dog would help too.

(Appendix C)

In line 15 Paul speaks in the simple past tense as he performs for Jessica, but in lines 16 and 17 they both move to the subjunctive, using wouldn't, could and would, as they discuss the possibilities. In other examples children move repeatedly between the two types of talk, even within a single turn.

69 David ... We can make it like she's even faster and she flies after them.

70 Paul Yeah she flies after them and gets to the house before them

71 David Then they open the door.

72 Paul And they open the door.

73 David and the witch could go arrrg! and jump out on them and grab them and put them in a cage.

(Appendix C).

In 69 'We can make it like' indicates that David is discussing possibilities. In 70 Paul replies in exploratory talk with 'Yeah' but then moves into presentational talk with 'she flies after them and gets to the house before them.' In 71 and 72 both children are performing using presentational talk. In

73 David returns to exploratory talk with 'and the witch could go', followed immediately by presentational talk with the sound effect 'arrrg!' He completes the line in presentational talk as he performs his idea. There is an overlap here between the two research questions, as we can see that even in their story-making, children are actually performing for each other.

4.11 Evaluating their own work

Much has been written about the role of self and peer assessment in children's learning (see the discussion of Clarke, Black and Williams etc in Chapter Two). The skills of evaluating storytelling discussions and performances and of giving feedback on each other's stories were used by the children in this study to develop their collaborative storytelling. The earlier discussion of the use of ground rules indicates the way that these ground rules, agreed on by the children, were used to evaluate discussion and performances. Children in both contexts had some experience of self and peer assessment in other contexts (see notes on discussions with class teachers in Appendix N, D7, H1) but the older, more articulate children from the Hillside School P5-7 class were able to engage in some evaluative discussion while the younger children from both the Hillside P3/4 class and the Dale School storytelling club and were more comfortable with expressing their evaluations through a simple and quick 'Thumbs up, in the middle, or down'. This evaluation of activities was regularly made explicit, but was also implicitly interwoven through the storytelling sessions.

Once again, previous experience was relevant to the development of this skill. The older children in the Hillside School class were more experienced in peer and self assessment than the children in the Dale School storytelling club. When the Hillside School P5-7 class provided feedback on one of the stories that I told to them, they were able to engage in a fairly sophisticated discussion about the storyteller imagining what it was like to be 'in the story' and simultaneously thinking ahead to what might happen next (Appendix N, H4-6). In Dale School storytelling club sessions, most children moved from the simple 'Thumbs' type of evaluation in earlier sessions (Appendix N, D9) to being able to answer questions such as, 'What was good about it?' and 'What

would have made it better?' which were asked at some time in each session (e.g. Appendix N, D21). Jason was never able to evaluate a performance, perhaps due to his lack of previous experience, perhaps because he only attended four club sessions. However, from session five onwards, Jessica, David and Paul were able to make constructive comments about storytelling and discussions (Appendix N, D21).

4.12 Conclusions

This chapter focused on the analysis of the processes by which children work collaboratively together to produce an oral story. These processes are complex and involve many inter-related skills, including the collaborative skills of creating, understanding and applying ground rules, of turn taking, listening and building on previous contributions; the learning skills of memorising and of evaluating their own and others' creative storytelling; the linguistic skills of recognising and using different types of talk in different contexts. It is argued that children learned to develop these skills through a process of legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice of creative storytelling, leading gradually to more central participation. These communities of practice were influenced by myself as facilitator/teacher in supporting and valuing creativity, modelling practice as a more experienced storyteller and supporting the ongoing process of children's evaluation of their own work. Children's learning is understood as socially situated within the two different contexts, the Dale School storytelling club and the Hillside School P5-7 class. Children varied in the cultural capital that they brought to the storytelling activities and there were marked differences between the two contexts in terms of children's previous experience of collaborative discussion and also in general literacy skills. These differences impacted on the level of collaborative storytelling skills that the children were able to develop.

Chapter Five

Analysis of the collaborative stories: narrative structure and performance

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the second research question 'What skills are involved in the performance of collaborative oral stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children?' It focuses on the analysis of five collaborative stories as narrative and as performance. While Chapter Four discussed the relevance of the data I collected to the first research question, Chapter Five uses the data to address the second research question. In this current chapter, underlying themes identified through the analytic process described in Chapter 3, section 3.13 are the concepts of socially constructed learning, socially situated performance and legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice of creative storytelling. In answering the second research question, the skills identified were:

- creating structured narratives
- creating narrative at figurative and thematic levels
- intertextual borrowing
- using different types of talk
- use of voice
- focused performance skills
- interaction with the audience

The final section of the current chapter will consider the conclusions which might be drawn from analysis of the collaborative stories as narratives and as performance.

5.2 Data analysed

The contexts are the same as those reported on in Chapter Four where the focus was on identifying skills involved in the process of collaborative story-making. To provide continuity, the current chapter will focus on the same five

stories as were analysed in Chapter Four. Information relevant to this chapter is presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 Stories from Dale School Storytelling Club

Story	Success	Tellers	Context	Story stimulus	Story summary
<i>The Snake in the Box</i>	X	Jessica and Jason	Dale School club Session 4	story opener -children finding a box.	A snake jumped out of the box and slithered away.
<i>The Light Sabre in the Box</i>	X	David and Kelly	Dale School club Session 4	story opener -children finding a box.	A light sabre and a chicken head were in the box, police were hunting a terrorist who lived in the house and an old woman, who was really the children's grandma disguised as a wizard, offered to take the children home.
<i>The Door in the Hill</i>	√	David, Jessica and Paul	Dale School club Session 7	story opener about two children and their pets going for a walk and finding what looked like a door in the hillside	Inside the door, there was a witch who wanted to eat them. The two children escaped from the witch and returned home, only to find that the witch had arrived before them and transformed into their mother, who told them to go back up the hill, where they were once again captured by the witch. This time the witch put them into cages but the boy, Michael, was able to cut through the bars of with a little pocket knife. The children pushed the witch into the cauldron where she turned into chocolate. Michael ate a bit of the chocolate and the children and their pets returned home safely.

Table 3 Stories from Hillside School P5-7 class

Story	Success	Tellers	Context	Story stimulus	Story summary
<i>The Last Noonoo</i>	√	John, Katy and Sharon	Hillside School, P5-7 class	challenge to create a story with audience participation	Marlon was getting too old for dummies (noonnoos) so his mum and gran found all the noonnoos and threw them away. Marlon's favourite noonnoo was hidden in his toy-box, but when he took it to the park, two bullies snatched it from him. He went home and found the very last noonnoo, but decided he was too big for noonnoos so he planted it in the garden. It grew into a noonnoo tree. Marlon became a successful businessman, selling noonnoos. (derived from published text, Murphy, 1995)
<i>The Apple</i>	√	Philip, Scott and Keith	Hillside School, P5-7 class	challenge to create a story with audience participation	A king wanted a special apple which he saw growing on a tree. After numerous attempts to get the apple by different methods were all unsuccessful, the princess kissed the tree, which turned into a tree full of golden apples with plenty for everyone.

In telling *The Snake in the Box* and *The Light Saber in the Box*, the two more experienced Primary 4 children (Jessica and David) were each paired with a less experienced child (Jason, P3, aged 7 and Kelly, P4, aged 8). These two stories were judged as relatively unsuccessful in terms of the Dale children's own definition of a successful story (agreed in session three, see Appendix N, D 12):

- Did the beginning make me want to hear more?
- Was I interested in what happened next?
- Was there a good ending?
- Would I like to hear/tell this story again? (Appendix N, D12).

The Dale children agreed that the most successful collaborative story told by children in the club was *The Door in the Hill*. *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo*

(and all of the other stories told by the Hillside School P5-7 class) were considered to be successful by the children using their own criteria (Appendix N, H6 and H9). The success criteria agreed by the children of this class during the first session, were:

- stories should have a recognisable structure of beginning, middle and end
- stories should create a problem which has to be resolved

In the second session they added their third criterion (H9), which was: stories should involve audience participation. *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo* were obviously enjoyed by the P1-2 audience (aged 5-7), who listened attentively, joined in when asked and applauded enthusiastically at the end of each story (Appendix N, H16). *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo* were chosen for analysis because they were particularly successful in meeting the P5-7 class criterion of generating audience participation.

These five stories were particularly useful in answering the second research question as they show a number of contrasts which shed light on the differences between the stories and on the skills involved in the performance of these collaborative stories. These contrasts were: the success or otherwise of the performance; the two contexts; the participating children's experience of storytelling. It is also possible to see some development of skills over time in comparing the performances of Jessica, Paul and David in the fourth and seventh sessions of the Dale School storytelling club. The contrasts and the development over time provide evidence for the emergence of skills which made the performances more successful.

Stories produced by the children in the Hillside class were consistently longer, more complex and had a more clearly defined structure than those of the children in the Dale School storytelling club. To some extent this may have been related to their age, but as noted in Chapter Three, children in the Hillside School P3-4 class (the same age-group as the storytelling club), in a single session of storytelling activities, also produced stories that were longer,

more complex and had a more clearly defined structure than those of the children in the Dale School storytelling club (Appendix N, H10 – H12). It seems likely that this was due to their socioeconomic background and their previous experience of reading and writing stories and of talking in groups. The importance of prior experience is borne out by the story *The Door in the Hill*, from session seven and nine of the Dale School storytelling club, which was significantly longer, more complex and had a more clearly defined structure than earlier stories by the same children. The contrasts between this and earlier stories suggest that the children's skills in collaborative oral storytelling were developed by their experiences of legitimate peripheral participation in the creative community of practice of the storytelling club

5.3 Creating structured narratives

For children to successfully create a collaborative oral story, it is essential that they develop the skill of creating a structured narrative. As discussed in Chapter Two, Martin (1997) proposes three levels of analysis for a story. The first is the overarching narrative level. She defines the basic unit of the narrative as an account of a change of state (1997:35-36). Each one of the five stories discussed here meets Martin's definition of narrative being an account of a change of state. The snake is in the box and finally slithers away. The children change from opening a box which contains a light sabre and a chicken head to being held up by police. Michael and Lizzie escape from the witch, return home, are recaptured by the witch and finally escape, leaving the witch dead. Marlon progresses from the state of being dependent on dummies, to dealing with bullies and finally becoming a successful businessman. The king wants the apple and finally receives more apples than he had expected. However, we have seen that, according to the children's own criteria, these stories are not equally successful. As discussed in Chapter Two, Martin's definition of narrative is too broad to be useful in the context of this study.

Toolan's definition of narrative, as cited in Chapter Two, is:

an account of a sequence of events that are perceived to be non-randomly connected, typically involving one or more humans or other

sentient participants, these being the experiencing individuals at the centre of events (2006:54)

All the stories discussed here involve one or more sentient beings and all present a sequence of events, but in *The Snake in the Box* and *The Light Sabre in the Box* I found it difficult as audience to perceive these events as being 'non-randomly connected'. (As discussed in Chapter Three it was not appropriate to dwell on negative evaluation of storytelling performances with the children because the purpose of the club was to develop the children's confidence in oral storytelling,) However, the other stories discussed all could be said to provide accounts of sequences of events that are 'non-randomly connected'.

For many primary teachers a working definition of a successful story is that it has a beginning, middle and end. (Dillingham, 2005). Bruner writes of the significance of characters, their plight, consciousness and intentionality in developing that 'structure which has a start, a development and a sense of ending' (1986:21). Bruner debates the relationship between the 'deep structures' of stories, perhaps brought about by the features of the minds of their creators or audience, 'what one is able to tell or to understand' (19986:16) and the variety of the surface features, which are particular to the specific genre of story. This debate is of particular relevance to my own study, where there is evidence that children's successful oral stories exhibit a deep structure which relates to Propp's analysis of 100 traditional Russian folktales, whilst their surface structure is influenced by contemporary popular culture. The children in the Hillside School P5-7 produced a similar definition in their own words. This was that

- stories should have a recognisable structure of beginning, middle and end
- stories should create a problem which has to be resolved

As noted in Chapter Two, their definition of a successful story is similar to that of the professional storyteller, Hartman, who writes that a story needs 'a beginning , a middle, an end and a problem' (ref). The Hillside P5-7 class

produced stories which have a clear crisis-redress and where the events are linked by causal relationships and the intentionality of the characters. (As discussed in Chapter Two and Three, children in the two contexts brought different social capital to the learning situations.) For example, the central crisis of *The Apple* is how the king is going to reach the apple. Redress finally comes when the princess kisses the tree and it turns into a tree full of golden apples with plenty for everyone. In *The Last Noonoo* there are three minor crises, the getting rid of the noonnoos once and for all, the discovery of last noonoo and the decision to bury the last noonoo. The story concludes with the major crisis – the discovery of the noonoo tree – and the redress is Marlon's progression into the adult world with his successful business venture. *The Door in the Hill* also satisfies Bruner's criteria of crisis-redress. It builds up to the crisis of capture by the witch, followed by the redress of the demise of the witch. One event logically leads to another, for example the witch's transformation into a peregrine falcon allows her to arrive at the door in the hill before them. Intentionality of characters is clear – the witch wants to capture and eat the children, the children want to avoid this happening.

In contrast, neither *The Snake in the Box*, nor *The Light Sabre in the Box* contain characters with clear intentionality. The snake jumped out of the box, went to the door, turned out to be a nice snake, jumped out of the window and ran or slithered away. Listeners have no idea of why it was in the box, why it wanted to get away or what was nice about it. There is limited causal relationship between events – the snake is in the box and the snake wants to escape. In *The Light Sabre in the Box*, there is no sense of crisis-redress, even though some potentially exciting events occur (police bashing into a house where there is a terrorist, shouting hands up to the wee boy and girl, someone shooting and an old woman turning into a wizard). There is limited causal relationship between events (police bashing into a house where there is a terrorist), but intentionality of characters is inconsistent.

Toolan refers to various studies which trace age-related development in children's stories, noting that there is a tendency for younger children to produce 'leap frog' narratives where the child jumps from one event to another

unsystematically. Leap-frogging can be seen in Kelly's contribution to *The Light Sabre in the Box* story.

3	Kelly	And this man was the person who had the chicken head and the light sabre and the sword. And the light saver
4	David	Sabre.
5	Kelly	And this old woman turned into a wizard ...

(Appendix H)

Although Kelly was the same age as Jessica and David she had less experience of oral storytelling. Session 4 was only the second occasion that she had attended the club, although she had previously expressed interest and completed her application (D6).

Propp (1984) offers a rather different approach to analysing the structure of stories, focusing on the ‘functions of dramatis personae’. This focus lies between the broad definitions of structure put forward by Martin, Toolan, Bruner etc (refs) and the motifs identified by Martin in her second (figurative) level of analysis.

Analysis of the performances of *The Door in the Hill* using the framework of Propp’s Morphology of the Folktale(1984) identifies 26 of Propp’s 31 functions, which suggests that it shows many of the features of a traditional tale (see Appendix F). (For present purposes, as stated in Chapter Three, a traditional tale is defined simply as a story which has existed within an oral tradition over several generations.) Jessica, Paul and David, in creating the structure of their collaborative story, were able to draw on their experience of legitimate peripheral participation in traditional tales and on the modelling provided by more experienced others (mainly myself). Recognition of Propp’s functions in *The Door in the Hill* may also help to explain the effectiveness of

this particular story told by Jessica, David and Paul. The functions seem familiar to the listener, who has encountered them in traditional tales.

Compared with *The Door in the Hill*, where 26 of Propp's 31 functions could be identified, *The Snake in the Box* yields none and *The Light Sabre in the Box* yields one (see Appendices G and H). The least successful stories seem to have almost no links with traditional tales (see Appendix F). At that stage in their experience of story-making and performance these children did not seem to be able to make use of this modelling. *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo*, successful stories from the Hillside School P5-7 class, each yield eight of Propp's functions (see Appendices I and J). This would suggest that there is a relationship between Propp's functions and what the children and I perceived as successful stories.

5.4 Creating narratives at figurative and thematic levels

Martin's second level of analysis is the figurative level, which relates to the figures or motifs of a text - 'the elements in a text that correspond to the physical world' (1997:67) and her third is the thematic or deep level, which relates to the 'inner world of the conceptual and abstract' (1997:67). This third level relates to the ideas and values which underlie the story. It is useful here to consider these two levels of analysis together as the motifs and deeper themes in the children's stories are often closely related.

Motifs in *The Snake in the Box* include:

- The snake
- The box
- The house

A deeper theme underlying *The Snake in the Box* might be

- Escape

If we consider the motifs and the deeper theme together, it seems that this story is about a living creature's escape from confinement and that the fundamental values expressed are about freedom. However, we might then

look at how successfully the story addresses these fundamental values. There is no indication of why the snake was in the box, its emotions, nor what it might do with its new-found freedom. There are no barriers to be overcome for the snake to escape. Perhaps these factors contributed to the failure of this story to engage its audience.

Motifs in *The Light Sabre in the Box* include:

- The light sabre
- The chicken head
- The terrorist
- The police
- Guns
- Grandma's shape-shifting (introduced by Kelly)
- Home (introduced by Kelly)

Deeper themes underlying *The Light Sabre in the Box* might include:

- Terrorism versus policing
- The power of weapons
- Home and safety (introduced by Kelly)

Again, considering these two levels together, it seems that David's part of this story is about legal and illegal violence. The fundamental values expressed seem to be confusion about these two types of violence. Kelly's part of the story seems to be about help from a disguised family member and the fundamental values expressed seem to be the security to be found in family and home. Here the factor which may have contributed to this story's failure to engage its audience could have been the children's inability to bring together the disparate themes of the two storytellers. This relates to the discussion in Chapter Four of the collaborative process of group storytelling. David and Kelly's difficulties in collaboration impacted on the story that they were able to produce.

Motifs in the *Door in the Hill* story include:

- Door – the door in the hill, the magic door, the door of the house
- Animals – the dog, the cat, the witch's animals
- Food – dog-pie, children soup, cat pudding, chocolate, the chocolate witch
- Transformation – witch is transformed into mum, peregrine falcon, chocolate
- Gender – roles – boy, girl, mum, witch
- Obedience – to mum, to the witch as mum

These motifs clearly connect with the imaginary physical world created by the children's story, but they can also be seen as connecting with the abstract and inner concepts of the deep level. For example the door motif is related to a change from one world to another world where different rules seem to apply.

Deeper themes underlying the story include:

- Change
- Other worlds
- Relationships between children and adults
- Power - lack of power
- Knowledge – lack of knowledge
- Good - evil

These deeper themes are expressed through references to the physical world. For example Michael and Lizzie lack the witch's knowledge of what is on the other side of the door in the hill, the witch's transformation into their mum and the danger of returning to the door in the hill. However they have (or at least Michael has) knowledge of the power of the little knife to cut through the bars or the cage.

Considering the two levels together, this story seems to be about the triumph of good over evil (fundamental to countless traditional tales). The fundamental value being expressed seems to be that good young people have the ability to overcome powerful evil. Part of the success of this story in engaging its audience probably lies in its success in expressing this fundamental value.

The terms themes and motifs were not used when asking children to discuss and evaluate their stories as these themes and motifs only became apparent through the process of analysing the data. However, children in the two contexts varied in their understanding of concepts such as themes.

Children in the Dale School storytelling club were not able to articulate concepts of themes in stories, even though, by session seven, they were able to produce a collaborative story which involved a number of interesting themes and which clearly expressed the fundamental value which lay behind it. In session two, when asked, 'What was that story about? What was the point of it?' they gave details from the story (D12). By session six they still needed support to identify the morals in fables, although they were able to select appropriately when I scaffolded their learning by offering them a choice of possible answers and subsequently were able to give suitable suggestions (D23). In contrast, I knew from teaching reading with the Hillside School P5-7 class (H1) that all children in the class were able to discuss themes of written stories. In the first and second storytelling sessions at Hillside School, children were asked, 'What is the moral/point of this story?' they were able to respond appropriately (H4-6) and could then suggest ideas for stories on a similar theme (H6-9). The skills of talking about stories, gained from previous experience, are likely to have contributed to the Hillside children's success in collaborative oral storytelling.

Motifs in *The Apple* include:

- The apple – which is sought after by the king
- The king- symbol of power and wealth
- Asking for help – here asking the audience for suggestions
- The princess – with a new approach to the problem

Deeper themes underlying *The Apple* include:

- Greed – the king wants the apple, although he does not need it
- Power – the king can command but cannot get what he wants

- Other people as a source of ideas – the king needs others to suggest what he should do to get the apple.
- Compulsion versus love – the king is trying to get the apple by using the power invested in his role, but the princess can get what she wants with a kiss

Considering the two levels together, this story would seem to be about how to get what you want. The fundamental value expressed seems to be that love and kindness are more effective than power and wealth.

Motifs in *The Last Noonoo* include:

- Noonnoos – dummies, symbols of early childhood behaviour
- The family – the boy Marlon, his mum and his gran
- Searching – for the noonnoos
- Bullies – who tease Marlon
- Burying – the last noonoo is buried in the garden
- The noonoo tree
- The happy ever after ending – business success and a move to Miami for Marlon

Deeper themes underlying *The Last Noonoo* include:

- Growing up - putting aside childish behaviour
- Unwillingness to grow up and put aside childish behaviour
- Independence – Marlon makes his own decisions about the remaining noonoo
- Dealing with evil – Marlon and the bullies
- The nature of success in life

Considering the two levels together, this story would seem to be about the process of growing up. The fundamental value expressed seems to be that children will find their own way to maturity.

Bettelheim (1991), from a psychoanalytic background, argued that traditional fairy stories (Märchen, here equated with traditional tales) offer the child a way 'to integrate rational order with the illogic of his unconscious' (1991:66). He would have explained the witch transforming into the mother in *The Door in the Hill* as a way for the children to come to terms with their experience of kind and loving parents sometimes transforming into angry people who tell children to do things that the children do not want to do. In *The Apple* Bettelheim would have explained the king trying unsuccessfully to get the apple by any means as helping children to understand that they cannot have everything they want, no matter how much fuss they make. *The Last Noonoo* deals overtly with the sort of issues that Bettelheim believed that traditional tales would help children to understand – issues of growing up and putting aside the symbols of early childhood. *The Snake in the Box*, although very short, clearly meant a lot to one of its creators, Jason, as he found it very funny. Perhaps it was the underlying theme of escape that appealed to him. This theme also relates to growing up if we adopt Bettelheim's perspective. In *The Light Sabre in the Box* the theme of the power of weapons features strongly in David's contribution. This theme, a great cause of interest and excitement for many boys, could be seen as reflecting their wish for maturity and power. Kelly's brief contribution to the story brings us back to shape-shifting and the grandmother who can also be a giant wizard. It is also the grandmother who offers security and safety.

Bettelheim believed strongly that only traditional fairy stories were capable of fulfilling the function of helping children to understand important questions such as 'Who am I?' an understanding which Bettelheim considered necessary for healthy development.. However, if narrative does have the role that Bettelheim suggests, it would seem that encouraging collaborative storytelling allows children to actively work out together the issues that might be important to them. Collaboration with others allows the individual child to take a step back from the personal commitment of creating an individual story and also gives the child the security of finding that their ideas are also significant to others.

One aspect of Bettelheim's who am I? question is that of gender, which is significant in children's developing sense of identity. The gender roles of traditional tales are notoriously stereotyped and this can be an argument either for avoiding the tales or for using them to help children become aware of gender stereotyping in society. In *The Apple* the king is stupid, fat and unable to get what he wants. The princess, on the other hand, is able to work out how to achieve her ends. The king uses force and the princess offers a kiss. The king has power at the beginning of the story, but at the end of the story the princess has shown that her gentle approach works. This story, told collaboratively by Phillip, Scott, Keith and their younger audience, provides an interesting comment on the way that children understand gender roles in society. In *The Door in the Hill* we see further examples of gender stereotyping. The sender (mother) is female. She sends the children out on their adventure, but remains at home herself. The witch is an example of a stereotypical female villain, who can change shape in order to deceive her victims. The boy Michael and the girl Lizzie begin the story as adventurers, then on encountering the witch they both become victimised heroes. It is in the final section of the story, told by Paul, that the two children are differentiated. Paul refers to 'little Lizzie' although there has been no previous mention of her age or size. It is Michael who cuts through the bars with the pocket knife and who dares to eat a piece of the chocolate that the witch has become. This part of the story, borrowed and reworked from Hansel and Gretel, is interesting as an example of my modelling not being imitated by the children. When I told the story of Hansel and Gretel in an earlier club session, I emphasised the active role of Gretel in taking initiatives and in freeing her brother. Modelling is perhaps less useful if it does not fit with previous learning. It seemed that the cultural values which Paul brought to the learning experience had a greater impact than my modelling. As discussed in Chapter Two, the cultural capital which children bring to storytelling will have an impact on the stories that they tell. We have also seen in Chapter Four that differences in David and Kelly's cultural capital seemed to contribute to their difficulties in collaborating together to produce a coherent story. (see D16-18 and Appendix H).

5.5 Intertextual borrowing

Both Bruner (1986) and Martin (1997) write about different levels of structure. Bruner comments on the difference between the deep structures of stories, which may be related to the human's innate propensity to think and understand in narrative, and the variety of surface features in different stories (1986:16). In the more successful of the children's collaborative stories in my study, it seems that deeper structures relate to fundamental values and to Propp's archetypal functions, perhaps to that innate need to construct narrative that Bruner describes. Borrowing from traditional tales was at times mediated through popular culture. Jessica, Paul and David acknowledged that surface structures in *The Door in the Hill* were influenced by intertextual borrowing from contemporary popular culture. For example, a characteristic scene in Disney cartoon retellings of traditional tales involves a song supported by screen images of numerous animals of different species moving in time to the music. There is a sense of perpetual and rapid motion as different animals take part. These are so characteristic of Disney cartoons that the movie 'Enchanted', which is a pastiche of Disney cartoons, features two such scenes. Jessica and David's image of the animals running about everywhere evokes these scenes and was later recognised by them as borrowed from Disney movies (D32-34). As discussed in Chapter Two, Dyson studied conversations, written texts and stories acted out by children as 'Author's Theatre'. She noted that much of the 'borrowing' is acknowledged by the children. Some borrowed 'textual toys' were identified by Dyson and her research assistants as being from popular culture (1996.1997, 2003). She notes that 'the meanings provided by commercial culture are not reproduced but reworked' (1997:16). In *The Door in the Hill*, discussion of the borrowings in their stories offered the participating children some insights into their own reworking of textual toys. Appendix D provides an example of children discussing sources of ideas in *The Door in the Hill* with me and I am careful not to suggest that such borrowing is cheating. It would have been interesting to have discussed the borrowing of the plot of *The Last Noonoo*, but at the time of the data collection I did not realise that this had taken place and none of the children in the class raised this issue. The final section of *The Door in the Hill* the plot owes much to the traditional tale of Hansel and Gretel, with

which the Dale School storytelling club children were familiar and which I had told to them in an earlier session (see D15 and Appendix D). In this case the borrowing was from a traditional tale, but it was a traditional tale which the children had experienced through popular culture. However, as in Dyson's work, borrowing is likely to be from a variety of sources, which, because popular culture itself borrows from a variety of sources, are intertwined in contemporary cultural life.

A device which is found both in twenty-first century computer games and in traditional tales from many parts of the world is that of shape-shifting, or transformation, where a character is transformed into someone or something else. Kelly introduced the idea of shape-shifting in *The Light Sabre in the Box* when she spoke of the 'wizard ...who was really their grandma (Appendix H: 5 +8). In their discussion and performances of *The Door in the Hill*, the three children used the term 'transformed' (from computer games and toys) to explain that the witch took on new shapes as their mum and as a peregrine falcon. The children suggested this borrowing themselves in their discussion of sources of ideas for stories (Appendix D).

An incident in *The Door in the Hill* which involved a sharing of knowledge among the children at the discussion stage was the 'little pocket-knife that could cut the hardest metal.' They discussed what you called a knife that could fold up, which was the hardest metal and whether a knife would be able to cut this. In terms of Propp's functions the knife would be a 'magical agent' (XIV). However, here the children drew on their knowledge of twenty-first century science and technology and were comfortable in integrating this knowledge into their story. Knife-crime featured regularly and horrifically in media accounts of society at the time, and the children borrowed some of their knowledge about knives from such sources. However in their story this knowledge is again transformed and the knife – used by a good character – could be used for good purposes.

In *The Light Sabre in the Box* the concept of the light sabre is borrowed from the Star Wars movies and the concept of a terrorist is borrowed from news

media. In *The Apple*, the concept of the king, with his horse, his royal gardens and his large kingdom is borrowed from traditional tales. As Rohrich (1986:7) points out 'in many fairy tales the king is only a variant on the figure of the wealthy peasant' as the original storytellers drew on their own experience. Children exposed to twenty-first century mass media may very well have more knowledge of the lives of royalty than the creators of traditional tales could ever have had, but these three children built on what they knew from traditional tales for their picture of the central character in *The Apple*. In *The Last Noonoo* the children borrowed most of the plot from the modern Jill Murphy story of the same name. The part of the story which deals with bullying was influenced by anti-bullying drama that the children had experienced recently (Appendix N, H7 and 9).

5.6 Socially constructed learning and socially situated performance

Socially constructed learning provides an important dimension in the theoretical framework which emerged from my reading and data analysis. As discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3, children learned to create and perform stories through legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in the creative communities of practice of the storytelling club and the class storytelling sessions. Power relationships and levels of experience in these communities of practice were unequal. As facilitator, teacher or simply as an adult, my own power was greater than the children's and as a more experienced storyteller I had knowledge and skills to share with them.

Individual children came to the sessions with different experiences and some children had more influence in the groups than others. For example, John in the Hillside School P5-7 class was confident and able to dominate discussion if not actively discouraged from doing this (H9). However, the children's participation was essential to the activities. Sessions normally began with a story told by myself, where the children participated as listeners, by joining in with responses and/or by contributing ideas when asked (e.g Appendix N, D12). At some time in each session children were asked to give feedback on storytelling by me or by their peers and they were encouraged to think of ways in which the stories or performances could be improved.

My own roles were complex, as discussed in Chapter Three. As researcher I observed and analysed. As facilitator I tried to develop a community of practice where creativity was valued and participants were able to negotiate their preferred levels of participation, some wanting to take an active role in story performance, others preferring to listen. As teacher I provided scaffolding for children to develop skills of storytelling, for example offering modelling by an experienced other, structuring evaluation of performances by others and by the storytellers themselves and introducing activities designed to simplify the tasks (Rogoff, 1990). The use of modelling seems to have been particularly useful in developing the children's skills, because they enjoyed listening to stories and so were motivated to make use of the techniques being modelled (Appendix N, D12). The more skilled or confident children acted as models for others, for example John (Hillside P5-7 class) was a very experienced performer in the local youth drama group, and the younger boys, Philip, Scott and Keith, appeared to copy his confident style in speaking to an audience. It seems likely that the children may at times have been unconsciously absorbing and developing the modelled behaviour, at other times they were making a conscious attempt to copy it. In evaluating story performances children learned to recognise and discuss techniques used, which encouraged them to try these for themselves (Appendix N, D12, D15). Simplifying the task involved various activities which allowed children to focus on one technique or element at a time. For example, one activity involved children taking turns to use a single word to describe an imaginary box and to use their voice to create a 'feeling' about the box (Appendix N, D18). Other activities focused on voices for characters (Appendix N, D24) memorising using the bare bones' technique (Appendix N, D22-24).

However oral storytelling involves inter-related skills and because oral storytelling is a performance it is necessary for the child to have developed to some degree all or most of the necessary skills in order to successfully perform for an audience, even an audience of one or an imaginary audience. Therefore the concept of simplifying the task is less relevant than that of identifying the skills needed and offering activities through which they can be learned. Once the skills are beginning to develop, the story performance task

can be simplified in various ways, for example by performing only for a small and sympathetic audience, performing only short stories and/or performing only stories that are well known to the teller. Scaffolding was also provided in the form of opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation. For example Katy and Sharon (Hillside School) were able to play very minor roles in their storytelling performance as they chose to work with John, who dominated the performance (Appendix N, H7). Similarly, Jessica, David and Paul chose to perform stories along with myself (Appendix N, D36)

In these ways the children are supported by more experienced others in progressing through their zone of proximal development towards success as collaborative performers. Future performances will lead to further learning though perhaps this learning will remain at the interpsychological level and not become available for the child to use independently at the intrapsychological level (to use Vygotsky's terms). However, progress through the ZPD can still be identified. For example, the children in the Dale School storytelling club made recognisable progress in creating and performing a collaborative story, but, in the duration of the club, they were not able to do this successfully without support. Their participation remained peripheral. They needed persuasion to accept the challenge of a storytelling performance for friends and family, or for sections of the school (Appendix N, D36) and we spent some time in sessions 8 and 9 negotiating the content of these performances, which ultimately involved me telling some of the stories with the children supporting my telling with mime and participation in responses (Appendix N, D36). On the other hand, children from the Hillside School P5-7 class were keen to participate more centrally in storytelling activities. They all wanted to take part in the performance for a younger class and none of them expressed any anxiety about this (Appendix N, H4-6). They were able to entertain and interest their audience successfully without the need for me to be involved in the story performance (Appendix N, H13-17).

5.7 Using different types of talk

As discussed in Chapters Two and Four. Barnes contrasts exploratory talk, where the speakers are exploring ideas, with presentational talk, talk where

'the speaker's attention is primarily focused on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of the audience' (2008:6-7). Presentational talk is the talk of performance and we find many examples of this type of talk in the successful storytelling performances. One example is John's

43	John	So, soon they realised they'd found <u>all</u> the noonoos ... or so they thought.	
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(Appendix I)

where the pause serves to emphasise 'or so they thought'. Another is Philip's

2	Phillip	...He was taking a walk in his royal gardens one day, when he spotted an apple on a tree. It looked like any normal apple but there was something about it that made the king want it. But when he tried to jump for it, he couldn't get to it, so he went and asked the queen what he should do and...	
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(Appendix J).

Here the phrase 'taking a walk in his royal gardens' helps the audience to build up a picture and also indicates the power and status of the king.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Barnes and Mercer each discuss different types of talk. Mercer contrasts exploratory with disputational and cumulative talk, while Barnes contrasts a slightly different concept of exploratory talk with presentational talk. In the current chapter it is useful to use Barnes' contrast of exploratory with presentational talk. As shown in Chapter Four, when children discuss a collaborative story, they perform short sections to each other, moving freely between exploratory and presentational talk. Using exploratory talk they make suggestions and consider each other's ideas. Using presentational talk, they perform an idea for their group.

Although the story-making process benefits from this switching between the different types of talk, for a successful story performance, children must appreciate that presentational talk is required. In the first session of the storytelling club, children found it difficult to make this adjustment and to use only presentational talk in their performances. (for example in my Research

journal I commented that ‘children talked with their partner rather than to the audience,’ see Appendix N, D9). However, by session seven they were far more successful, at times resorting to non-verbal methods of communicating ideas that would have required exploratory talk as when Jessica wanted to communicate to the boys that her turn was finished (see Appendix B)

5.8 Performance skills

Swann (2009) in her study of performances by professional storytellers, considers different semiotic resources. Amongst these is use of voice. Of the children in the study, only one, John, had sufficiently developed performance skills to be able to adopt a ‘particular... accent or voice quality’ that was significantly different from his everyday talk (Swann, 2009: page? In other successful performances, however, children could be heard to modify their accents and voice qualities for the performances. For example Philip, Scott and Keith (Appendix J) all projected their voices and spoke more slowly and clearly in order to command attention from their young audience.

Bakhtin’s concept of double-voicing (ref), where a speaker will use a voice that is different from their own is particularly relevant to oral story performances. Here a narrator will speak in his/her ‘narrator voice’ and when recounting the words of another, will use a different voice to signify that these are the words of a third person, for example, Scott’s

3	Scott	She said ... why don't you try climbing the tree?
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(Appendix J)

And Keith’s:

5	Keith	They said ... why don't you stand on your horse?
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(Appendix J)

In performing *The Door in the Hill* for an audience, Jessica, Paul and David made use of voice techniques that had been modelled and discussed in

previous sessions, e.g. variations in pace and pitch, applied to single words or sentences. They also looked at their audience and used voice and facial expressions to interest the audience (see Appendix A and D25, 26, 28). The transcript indicates where this was particularly successful. Again, these techniques had been modelled and discussed in previous sessions (D24). It was noticeable that David was using changing pace and inflection, unlike his storytelling in earlier sessions when he tended to rush and to speak in a monotone (D12). The children's development of skills in using their voices in interesting ways to capture an audience's attention is another example of the value of legitimate peripheral participation in the creative community of practice of storytelling in developing the skills needed for successful story-performance.

Storytelling is now recognised as a 'distinctive performance genre' (Swann, 2009:) Children telling collaborative stories for their peers or other audiences are 'taking the role of the performer' (Thornborrow and Coates:68)

So what is involved in moving from everyday talk to 'taking the role of the performer' (Thornborrow and Coates 2005:68)? Barnes' concept of presentational talk is only part of this change. Thornborrow and Coates argue that performance involves 'a focusing of communicative events' (2005:69). They identify seven dimensions of this focusing of communicative events into a performance but their work relates to professional storytelling performances and as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.8, not all of these dimensions are relevant to the performances of novice child storytellers. For the purposes of considering children's collaborative story performances in this study, the relevant dimensions are

- Performer focusing – performers 'hold a floor' and are listened to
- Relational focusing – performances are for a specific audience
- Form focusing – the style of language used is important
- Meaning focusing – there is an intensity to utterances

All the children experienced performer focusing. They were able to 'hold a floor' and be listened to. To some extent this is due to my actions as the

facilitator of the storytelling club or teacher and it is unlikely that all of these children would have been able to and 'hold a floor' without the scaffolding of an adult supporting them by encouraging others to listen respectfully (e.g. Appendix N, D9). However, the children in the Hillside School P5-7 class were skilled in relational focusing, as shown in their management of the audience participation during their performance. They were very conscious of their target audience and tailored their performances to suit their audience of younger children by asking for contributions (see Appendices I and J) and by beginning their story with a song (Appendix I, turn 1)

In *The Light Sabre in the Box* David and Kelly seemed to be involved in a form of individual and private play as was Jason in *The Snake in the Box*. These children did not achieve relational focusing. Jessica, however, was perhaps involved in relational focusing and form focusing when she insisted on the phrase 'slithered away'. She seemed to be attempting to interest her audience with this phrase and she appeared to be aware of the onomatopoeic power of the word 'slithered' in relation to the snake's movement. The successful performances – *The Door in the Hill*, *The Apple* and *The Last Noonoo* – all involved form focusing, with appropriate styles of language and meaning focusing, with an intensity which was different from everyday talk. One example is this sequence from *The Last Noonoo*, which could be compared to the work of professional storytellers.

17	John	Yes. He loved his <u>dummies</u> . And <u>every year since he was five</u> his mum and dad said...(look from Katy) ... his gran said ...
18	Katy	You've to get rid of those noonnoos once and for all.
19	All three	No! No! No!
20	John	And then when he was <u>seven</u>
21	All three	No! No! No! No!

22	John	And then when he was <u>eight</u>
23	All three plus audience	No! No! No!
24	John	Nine.
25	All three plus audience	No! No! No!
26	John	<u>And finally when he was 10, his mum and his gran decided to get all his noonos and throw them away</u>

(Appendix I)

Here the repetition and patterning show form focusing and the growing intensity and volume through the exchange show meaning focusing. We see that form focusing is related to Swann's concept of poetic language, which includes patterning, repetition, and verbal routines. In *The Door in the Hill* we can identify that well-known verbal routine of oral communication, the three-part list (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.8). Jessica and Paul enjoyed the three-part list of dog pie, children soup and cat pudding (see Appendix A, turn 1). Later in the same story, Paul told how the witch put Michael and 'little Lizzie' into cages, the cat into a carrying case and the dog into a kennel with bars (Appendix A, turns 18 and 20). Paul's three-part list of cages echoes the earlier list of food.

Equally, the presence of some of Swann's visual features in the performances observed in this study – particularly gesture, facial expression, posture, movement – are an indication that children have learned some of the skills of successful oral story performance. Swann notes that the professional storytellers she observed made sophisticated use of visual performance elements, for example by combining their narration with mime to represent a character's actions. In collaborative story performances different children were able to develop these elements at different times, thus simplifying the task.

Jessica, Paul and David used this approach in *The Door in the Hill* performances, where the children who were not telling mimed the actions of the characters (see Appendix A and Appendix N, D35).

5.9 Interaction with audience

Swann notes that interacting with the audience is a 'significant aspect of performance by the professional storyteller (2009). She describes routines used to 'bring the audience into the story world', direct questioning of the audience and the use of patterns involving rhythm and repetition, all of which were used by the children in the present study to a greater or lesser degree. Swann also notes that the use of mime, direct eye contact with the audience and the technique of directly addressing the audience were also used by the professionals to maintain audience involvement. Audience participation was discussed with the children in the Dale School storytelling club (D12) and was experienced by them along with a more experienced other (myself) when taking part in a more adult-directed performance (D36). Children in the Hillside School P5-7 class were able to successfully plan for and perform this element in their collaborative stories.

Storytelling performances differ from most theatrical performances in that each storytelling performance is unique, because it relies on the unique relationship of the teller and the audience in the specific context. There is no set script to be learned, but the teller uses particular language and specific performance features to suit the context. 'It is audience and storyteller together, then, that produce a particular type of performance.' (Swann, 2009:) Professional storytellers often make much use of audience participation and will vary the degree of audience interaction from performance to performance. I challenged children from the Hillside School class P5-7 class to include audience participation in their performances and all groups were successful in this. These children had experience of communicating with an audience of younger children in assemblies and drama and I had previously worked with them on ways to involve their audience in assembly presentations (Appendix N, H1). Phillip, Scott and Keith were particularly successful at accepting every

suggestion from audience members and integrating it smoothly into their story.

6	Phillip	So the king tried to stand on his horse, but the horse wasn't amused and wouldn't let him. So the king finally decided to go and ask the people of the kingdom. And they came up with... What do you think they came up with...?
7	Audience response	Using a ladder
8	Scott	So the king tried to climb up his royal ladder, but under his weight the ladder snapped and he fell backwards. Any other...so the king asked some more villagers...?
9	Audience response	A trampoline?
10	Keith	So the king went to get a trampoline, but he went right through the trampoline because he was so fat. (Asks named audience members)
11	Audience response	He could get a ladder of metal and he could just climb over the tree.
12	Phillip	But, in the kingdom they didn't have metal ladders for some reason because they didn't like metal, so they only had wooden ones and the king was too heavy to use them. (Asks named audience members)

(Appendix J)

Audience participation was presented as a challenge by me to the P5-7 class, who, at the beginning of the sessions already showed some skills in story-making and performance. I had worked on audience participation with these children in preparing a class assembly (Appendix N, H1), but I was unsure of

whether they would be able to devise successful audience participation in their story performances. However, in preparing their stories, all the Hillside School groups were able to plan for some audience participation. For example John, Katy and Sharon developed the No! No! No! response, where they encouraged their audience to join in with them (see Appendix I, turns 18-25).

In discussing specific ground rules for the performance (session two), it was agreed that the children would try to accept every suggestion they received from their audience, recognising that audience responses are unpredictable. Baumann (1986) and Swann (2009) discuss audience participation as a strategy for professional storytellers, as well-developed skills are required, for the storyteller cannot plan and rehearse the whole story but must be flexible in responding to audience suggestions.

Phillip, Scott and Keith thought about the difficulties of audience participation. They discussed this in their planning during session two and there was class discussion of the problems of audience participation following another group's unsuccessful first attempt in session (Appendix N, H9-11). Phillip, Scott and Keith worked out a way to involve their audience in developing the story but at the same time to keep control of the basic structure of the plot. This group were particularly successful in thinking on their feet and making use of ideas from their audience.

- 13

Audience response

They could cut down the tree?
- 14

Scott

So, the king tried to cut down the tree with an axe but the tree was far too thick and it blunted the axe.
(Asks named audience members)
- 15

Audience response

Um... a big ladder, which they could lean against the tree and then reach for the apple.
- 16

Keith

But remember, the king already tried that and he was too heavy and so the ladder broke, so that wouldn't work.
(Asks named audience member)

(Appendix J)

In *The Last Noonoo* story (see Appendix I) John was able to make use of the audience's suggestions of hiding places for noonnoos.

29	Audience response	They looked in the sock drawers?
30	John	They looked in the sock drawer and they found <u>seven</u> noonnoos. Where did they look next (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
31	Audience response	Under his bed?
32	John	Under the bed, they found <u>one</u> noonnoo. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
33	Audience response	Under his pillow?
34	John	They found one noonnoo there as well.
35	Audience response	In his T-shirt cupboard?
36	John	They looked in the t-shirt cupboard and they didn't find any in there.
37	Audience response	In the fridge?
38	John	Nope, none in there either.
39	Audience response	Pants drawer?
40	John	They looked in his <u>pants</u> drawer and they found <u>three</u> in there.

(Appendix !)

In contrast, John found it more difficult to accept every suggestion from the audience when he already had the 'correct answer' in his head.

51	John	...Then he had a tremendous* idea. Can anyone think
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		what it is? (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
52	Audience response	Make a paper noonoo?
53		(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)? (<i>indistinguishable</i>)
54	John	<u>What?</u> (<i>laughter</i>)
55	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
56	Audience response	Burn all his noonos that his mum and gran hadn't got?
57	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
58	Audience response	Blow it up with the dynamite?
59	John	What he did decide to do was ... I'm going to bury it in the garden to keep it safe.

(Appendix I)

Having found that the audience did not supply the answer he was looking for in this exchange, John had to provide the answer himself. He played safe by shaping the responses ('almost right') in his next exchange with the audience.

60	John	(He) went out the next morning and saw the most spectacular thing he had ever seen. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
61	Audience response	An Xbox 360? (<i>Laughter</i>)
62	John	Cool
63	Audience	Noonoos were growing out of the ground?

	response	
64	John	Nope, it's almost right.
65	Audience response	A noonoo tree?
66	John	Yes. He'd grown ... a <u>noonoo tree</u>

(Appendix I)

Children from the Dale School storytelling club were able to experience audience participation as audience when I modelled oral storytelling for them in each session. They were also able to experience audience participation as performers in collaborative performances with myself of *The Enormous Turnip*, which was performed for younger pupils (D36). In both of these performances I told the story while Jessica, David, Paul, Kelly and Angus mimed parts of the story in role. They also joined in with the cumulative refrain (The old man pulled, the old woman pulled etc) encouraging the audience to join in too.

5.10 Conclusions

Analysis of these five collaborative stories suggests that the skills of collaborative oral story-making and story performance are complex and interrelated. As the stories were considered both as narrative and as performance, some of these skills relate to creating and structuring narratives and others to performing for an audience. Collaborative skills were discussed in Chapter Four, and they underlie the processes of collaborative performance as well as underlying the process of collaborative creation of the stories.

Skills of structuring narratives can be identified by comparing successful with less successful stories. It can be seen that successful stories have a recognisable structure, with a climax and resolution, providing causal links and consistency in the intentionality of characters. However, successful stories have a satisfying structure on different levels. They may meet

unconscious needs to understand problematic issues and to develop concepts of identity, providing a secure situation in which to play with ideas about identity and about elements of everyday life that might be problematic. They may address fundamental values and deal with themes and motifs which are interesting and satisfying to the listener. They may entertain by providing links with popular culture.

Analysis of the children's story performances indicates that successful performances involve a language that is adapted to meet the needs of the audience – presentational talk (Barnes, 2008). More specifically, this language is appropriate to the genre of oral storytelling and is focused for the performance. Other focusing skills including form focusing, meaning focusing, performer focusing, relational focusing and of developing interaction with an audience enhance the children's performances. It is appropriate and useful to make use of and modify frameworks for analysis of performance skills in professional storytellers' performances, for the children, as novice storytellers, are also becoming part of the wider community of practice of storytelling.

The socially situated nature of the children's creation and performance of stories is an important element in this analysis. Children learn through legitimate peripheral participation in a creative community of practice of storytelling, moving at their own rate from peripheral to central participation as they develop confidence in their own ability to collaborate with others, create successful stories and successfully perform these stories for an audience. The success or otherwise of the storytelling performance and of the skills of the storytellers can be judged by the audience's enjoyment of the performance. This was an essential criterion by which the stories were evaluated by the children as tellers and audience.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will reflect back over the whole research process and consider the conclusions to be drawn from analysis of the data in terms of the two research questions: It will then offer some general points relevant to both research questions and reflection on the implications for policy and practice that can be drawn from the findings. The final section will suggest possible directions for future research which emerge from this study.

the highly specific literate practices constructed within schools may not yield the only significant discourses and practices which are required by individuals within a multi-field social space. (p105) Carrington and Luke 97)

6.2 The research process

What do I write about here? I think this should just be integrated into the other sections.

and mime.

6.3 Skills involved in the process of creating collaborative stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children

Analysis of the data suggests that skills involved in the process of creating collaborative stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children would be the use of ground rules for collaborative talk, the communicative skills of turn-taking, listening to others and using different types of talk in different contexts and finally the skill of building creatively on the contributions of others

6.4 Skills involved in the performance of collaborative stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children

Analysis of the data suggests that skills involved in the performance of collaborative stories by groups of middle and upper primary school children could usefully be separated into skills related to the collaborative skills required for the production of a narrative and the collaborative skills required for a story performance.

Skills related to the collaborative production of a narrative would include: creating a recognisable structure, with a beginning, middle and end, posing a problem and through the narrative, resolving that problem, providing causal links and consistency of motivation in characters, making use of familiar motifs, used in new and creative ways, memorising and recall and the skills of making use of patterns and language play,

Collaborative skills required for a story performance are the performance skills of communicating with an audience, focusing, including form focusing, meaning focusing, performer focusing and relational focusing, memorising and recall, the skills of using appropriate verbal and poetic language and the skills of using visual elements, such as eye contact, gesture and mime.

6.5 Skills of collaborative story-making and story performance

This study shows that the skills involved in collaborative story-making and story performance are complex and interrelated.

Although collaborative storytelling may appear to be a small area of any primary curriculum, is notable that many of the skills involved in its success are highly transferable. Collaborative skills such as turn-taking, listening to others and building on the contributions of others are relevant to both research questions, but they are also used in many areas of life. Transferable skills – other areas of the curriculum other areas of life . I particular this would seem to be a way of learning which is encountered frequently in the adult world that the children will move into.

The process of learning by moving from legitimate peripheral participation towards central participation has been identified in this study. This is learning which is socially situated within creative communities of practice. It stands in sharp contrast to the

Didactic teaching empty vessel models

Also in contrast to the constructivist model of the child learning by exploring her own world

6.6 Discussion

For centuries before the development of reading and writing, narrative was produced orally and was handed on from one individual to others. Each of these individuals made sense of the narratives that they heard, relating them to their own experience and their experience of the social worlds that they inhabited. MacDonald, writes of the same story being found on a 3000 year old cuneiform tablet from the Middle East and in a 20th century collection of oral tales from Russia (1993:14). For Barthes, (1977, cited in Fox 1993:25) 'Narrative is international, transhistorical and transcultural.' Bruner wrote

It is conceivable that our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social world around us (1986:)

Bruner's claim for the importance of narrative is indeed major. He sees it as developing the connection between individuals and social groups, as a way of constructing that sense of reality which humans take for granted in their everyday life. The taken-for-granted sense of reality is part of the normal experience for those who have grown up in the 20th century western (minority) world, even when other perspectives such as that of post-modernism may lead them to continually question that everyday sense of reality or perhaps to recognise the relativity of a socially constructed sense of reality to anything that might conceivably be called objective reality.

In the literature on narrative writers persistently argue for the primal importance of narrative for humans. If we accept, with Bruner, that narrative is a major element in making sense of the world, of socially constructing reality, and with Barthes that research to date shows that narrative has existed in all known cultures, it would seem desirable that greater value be placed on the many forms of narrative available in early 21st century minority world. These include the fictional products of TV, movies, computer games, chain emails, as well as the more obvious written and oral forms of narrative. Bauman considers that:

the verbal art forms of a society (should) be comprehended as part of larger social and cultural systems organising the social use of language (1986:9)

In the twenty-first century, these verbal art forms are diverse and are bound up with social and cultural systems that support them. I would argue that oral storytelling has an important place among the verbal art forms of the twenty-first century, for it's origins go back far earlier than the reading, writing and other media which jostle for position there.

6.7 Implications for policy and practice

Why use collaborative storytelling in primary schools?

What could be done to develop collaborative storytelling in primary schools?

Take storytelling seriously

oral v written language Corden, Goodwin, Grainger

Support of oral and Written language

Interrelated

Historical

Dillingham, Corbett Grainger

Analysis of the data suggests that skills involved in collaborative story-making and story performance are complex and interrelated. It would also suggest that these are valuable communicative and social skills for primary school pupils to learn. Collaborative oral storytelling offers an enjoyable context in which these skills can be learned and practised. It seems that collaborative

oral storytelling is motivating for children, that it can help them to develop the skills listed above, that it can help to enhance their memory and recall skills and that it can offer the opportunity of a secure situation in which to play with ideas about identity and about elements of their everyday life that might be problematic.

In considering implications for policy and practice I would suggest that successful strategies for developing children's skills in oral storytelling would include the use of collaborative group work across the curriculum, so that children can agree on and become familiar with their own ground rules for talking and listening and are comfortable with sharing ideas. Children's learning of skills of collaborative story-making and story performance can be facilitated by agreeing on and using ground rules for the activities. Various elements of scaffolding are also relevant, including motivating children to undertake the task, modelling skills to be learned, isolating particular skills, developing activities to help develop these skills and also discussion and evaluation of progress with peers.

It would seem that a successful strategy for scaffolding of the children's learning about oral storytelling was modelling by more experienced others within a creative community of practice. The use of modelling may be particularly valuable in the context of oral story performance because the children enjoyed listening to stories and so were motivated to make use of the techniques being modelled. It seems likely that there are both conscious and unconscious elements to the effect of modelling. Sometimes the children may be unconsciously 'picking up' the modelled behaviour, at other times they may be making a conscious attempt to copy it. In evaluating storytelling activities children learn to recognise and discuss techniques used, which encourages them to try these for themselves. Various activities allowed children to focus on one technique or element at a time. For example, one activity involved children taking turns to use a single word to describe an imaginary box and to use their voice to create a 'feeling' about the box. Other activities focused on voices for characters, varying pace and memorising. These activities relate to another element of scaffolding – simplifying the task (Rogoff, 1990). However

oral story-making and story performance involve inter-related skills, as mentioned above. For a successful story performance it is necessary for the child to have developed to some degree all or most of the necessary skills in order to successfully perform for an audience, even an audience of one or an imaginary audience. Therefore the concept of simplifying the task is less relevant than that of identifying the skills needed and teaching them separately. Once the skills are beginning to develop, the story performance task can be simplified in various ways, for example by performing only for a small and sympathetic audience, performing only short stories and/or performing only stories that are well known to the teller. Another strategy is for the children to take part in a performance along with a more experienced adult storyteller.

Refer back to this

In this way the children are supported by more experienced others in progressing through their zone of proximal development towards success as collaborative performers. Future performances will lead to further learning though perhaps this learning will remain at the interpsychological level and not become available for the child to use independently at the intrapsychological level (to use Vygotsky's terms), although progress through the ZPD can still be identified.

Refer back to this

Discussing Bruner and the LASS there may be many elements of human language acquisition, language development and language use that build on innate predispositions. If this is the case, then it is understandable that humans enjoy acquiring, developing and using different forms of language. Many humans, adults and children, enjoy developing written literacy practices. Others enjoy the increasing convergence of written and spoken forms of language in, for example, emails or text messages. (Carter, 2004) For others, oral story telling can offer unique opportunities to enjoy developing literacy and social skills simultaneously.

Bassey's check-list (1999:75) in ch 3

And

in Bassey's words, a case study should be 'an invitation to try it and see if it works for you' (1999:52). In disseminating the findings of the study, through this thesis and through other publications and presentations, I will provide vicarious experiences to encourage other teachers to try it and see if it works for them.

Perhaps the important element is for children to appreciate that stories can be told by people whom they know in their everyday lives. This might be common sense knowledge in other cultures, but anyone who tells stories in primary schools can cite instances of children who are amazed that someone can tell a story 'without a book'. Similarly teachers may find it quite challenging to 'put away the book' and tell, rather than read, the story (Grugeon and Gardner, Discuss in Ch 4.

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Tidy this up

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- C: *The Door in the Hill* – discussion
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- G: Transcript - *The Snake in the Box*
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Table 1 Data collected (no notes)

Reference	Date	Location	Description	Type of data
D1	April – May 2007	Dale	Reflection on target classes at Dale	Research Journal
D2	10.10.07	Dale	Interview schedule for D3	Word file
D3	12.10.07	Dale	Interview with head teacher	Audio
D4	22.10.07	Dale	Letter to parents and pupils	Word file
D5	26.10.07	Dale	Reflection on sessions to introduce storytelling club to 2 classes	Research Journal
D6	31.10.07	Dale	Completed permission forms and applications from children	Paper documents
D7	2.11.07	Dale	Notes of discussions with class teachers	Research Journal
D8 - 9	13.11.07	Dale	Storytelling session 1 Jessica, David, Paul, Angus +2	Audio Research Journal
D10 -12	20.11.07	Dale	Storytelling session 2 Jessica, David, Paul, Jason	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D13 -15	27.11.07	Dale	Storytelling session 3 Jessica, Paul, Jason. Kelly, Angus +2	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D16 - 18	8.1.08	Dale	Storytelling session 4 Jessica, Paul, David, Jason. Kelly, Angus	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D19 -21	15.1.08	Dale	Storytelling session 5 Jessica, David, Paul +2	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D22 - 24	22.1.08	Dale	Storytelling session 6 Jessica, Paul, David, Jason. Kelly, Angus	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D25 - 28	29.1.08	Dale	Storytelling session 7 Jessica, David, Paul	Audio Transcript Video Research Journal
D29 - 31	19.2.08	Dale	Storytelling session 8 Jessica, Paul, Angus	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D32 - 34	26.2.08	Dale	Storytelling session 9 Jessica, Paul, David, Angus	Audio Transcript Research Journal
D35 - 36	March 08	Dale	Story performances for other audiences	Research Journal
X1	July 08	N/A	Five stories matched to Propp's functions of <i>dramatis personae</i>	Word file
H1	14.3.08	Hillside	Thoughts on selection of Hillside School for collection of data.	Research Journal
H2	April 08	Hillside	Discussion with head teacher	Research Journal

H3	May 08	Hillside	Completed permission forms and applications from children	Paper documents
H4 - 6	19.5.08	Hillside	P5-7 class session 1	Audio Transcript Research Journal
H7-9	13.6.08	Hillside	P5-7 class session 2	Audio Transcript Research Journal
H10 - 12	18.6.08	Hillside	P3-4 class session 1	Audio Transcript Research Journal
H13 - 17	24.6.08	Hillside	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	Audio Transcript Video Photos Research Journal

Table 2 Summary of information about children

Add more – pen portraits

Child	School	Stage	Age	Sessions when Present	Stories
Jessica	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	<i>The Snake in the Box</i> <i>The Door in the Hill</i>
David	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9	<i>The Light Sabre in the Box</i> <i>The Door in the Hill</i>
Paul	Dale	P4	8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	<i>The Door in the Hill</i>
Kelly	Dale	P4	8	3, 4, 6	<i>The Light Sabre in the Box</i>
Jason	Dale	P3	7	2, 3, 4, 6,	<i>The Snake in the Box</i>
Angus	Dale	P3	7	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9	None of selected stories
John	Hillside	P7	12	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Katie	Hillside	P7	12	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Sharon	Hillside	P7	11	1,2,3	<i>The Last Noonoo</i>
Keith	Hillside	P5	9	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>
Phillip	Hillside	P6	10	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>
Scott	Hillside	P6	11	1,2,3	<i>The Apple</i>

Appendices

Underlining indicates special emphasis, inflection or tone colour to convey its meaning to listeners.

Appendix A Transcript of collaborative story: *The Door in the Hill* – first telling

Storytelling club, Dale School

Storytelling club session 7

Jessica, David, Paul

The children chose the characters for the story: Michael, Lizzie, a dog and a cat. I began the story by telling how mum told Michael and Lizzie to take the dog for a walk, the cat followed after and they went up the hill where they found a strange door in the rocks. The children discussed their part of the story for approximately 12 minutes, becoming very animated over their discussions. They then told the story.

	Speaker	Dialogue	Comments
1	Jessica	When they opened the door, the witch came in, well the witch was there. And the witch was trying to turn them into dog pie, children soup and cat pudding. And the cat was all running about and the dog was running about too.	
2		<i>(Whispers)</i>	
3	Jessica	The cat and the dog were running about like mad	
4		<i>(Dog and cat noises from Paul and David)</i>	
5	Jessica	And the witch, well <u>really</u> she didn't like it and ... And then they found a <u>magic door</u> . They went through the door... They went through the door and they ran free.	
6		<i>(Whispers)</i>	
7	David	Well they ran out and the witch tried to catch them.	
8		<i>(Dog and cat noises from Jessica and</i>	

		<i>Paul)</i>	
9	David	The dog and the cat came too.	
10		<i>(Dog and cat noises)</i>	
11	David	There was lots of <u>animals</u> , looking at them, <u>wondering</u> What are they <u>doing?</u> <i>(amazed tone)</i> <u>Why are they running away?</u> Why are they running away from that witch? That witch is nice to us. B-u-ut, the witch <u>wasn't being nice to them</u> she was just giving them <u>tablets</u> to make them <u>think</u> that she was being nice to them. She's not really <i>(aside)</i> B-u-t they kept on running. The witch still couldn't catch them up. They ran <u>wow</u> as <u>fast</u> as they could into the house.	
12		<i>(Animal noises)</i>	
13	David	Well the witch transformed into their <u>mum</u> <i>(excited tone)</i> Yes, their <u>mum</u> <i>(slowly)</i> came <u>out</u> the house, <u>out</u> the door and said <u>Where have you been?</u> <i>(cross)</i>	
14	David	Well, we went up to the mountains and there was this door and we went in and there was this witch that chased us And then their mum said Go back up and see if the witch is there So they went up there but they didn't know that their mum was actually the <u>witch</u> . The <u>witch</u> turned into a peregrine falcon the fastest bird in the world and then she went m-u-c-h faster to the door.	
15		<i>(Panting)</i>	
16	David	<u>Right</u> to the door. <u>Then</u> she went into the house before they even got there by a mile a-n-d when they opened the door she <u>jumped</u> out	
17		<i>(Whispers)</i>	
18	Paul	The witch grabbed little Lizzie and put them in a cage and put the cat in a little travelling case and	
19		<i>(Animal noises)</i>	
20	Paul	Put the dog in a kennel with <u>bars</u> on the front and then while the witch was making a potion ... Michael got out a	

		little pocket knife that could cut the hardest metal and they got out and pushed the witch into the cauldron. And when the witch came out she turned into <u>chocolate</u> . And Michael took a bit out of it and ate it. And they got the cat and the dog and went home. The end.	
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They told the story in 3 sections, Jessica, David and Paul in that order, with the other 2 children 'illustrating' the story with mime. I suggested that this was they were doing and the children agreed.

Appendix B Notes on video of parts of discussion about *The Door in the Hill*

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Speaker	Dialogue and comments
1		David out of room - Jessica and Paul discussing some possibilities, facing each other, looking at the person speaking
2	Jessica	'but they wouldn't have enough time'
3		Jessica leans over towards Paul. Paul leans towards Jessica.
4	Jessica	'Well they could, they found a *magic door*.' Gestures indicate door.
5	Paul	'Yeah* Let's go for that!' Showing door with hands, arms
6		David comes back in, sits in empty chair between Jessica and Paul.
7		They tell David what they've thought so far, leaning towards him and waiting – for his approval?
8	David	'Why don't they, like, get caught by the witch? But then they struggle free.' Mimes struggle.
9		Jessica and Paul facing David
10	David	'Mmm'
11		David and Paul talking. Hand gestures from Jessica –trying to get a word in?
12		Lots of mime as they discuss which bird the witch should turn into. David – bird flapping wings, bird of prey – long straight arms, stretching up.
13		Indistinct – tone suggests enthusiasm. Children sitting looking at each other, listening, visibly reacting to each other's contributions with body movements and facial expressions.
14	David	'She's flying faster.' Mimes
15	Paul	'Yeah she flies after them and she gets to the house before them.'
16	David	'and then they open the door.' Mime from all.
17	David	'and they all get behind the door and then they jump out on her.' Mimes.
18		Discussion of witch putting Michael, Lizzie, cat and dog in cages. Some mime and changing of positions.

Appendix C Door in The Hill – discussion

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	Paul	Maybe a witch... There's a witch in there. And she wants to turn them into soup. ... and dog pie.
2	Jessica	And cat...
3	Paul	Cat pudding?
4	Jessica	OK.
5	Paul	OK. Dog pie would be ... like a starter, and then children soup would be .. (<i>laughs</i>) the main course and then ..
6	Jessica	Cat dessert.
7	Paul	And then the cat would be the dessert
8	Jessica	Ok So she tried to turn them into ...(<i>indistinguishable</i>) and it didn't work
9	Paul	Yeah.
10	Jessica	It did work or it didn't?
11	Paul	Well they escaped
12	Jessica	They escaped.
13	Paul	Somehow.
14	Jessica	Somehow, because she might have closed the door with her magic.
15	Paul	They found a shovel, dug and dug up.
16	Jessica	But they wouldn't have enough time
17	Paul	They could dig as fast as they could and the dog would help too.
18	Jessica	What about the cat?
19	Paul	It'd get all mucky.
20	Jessica	Well, they could ... They found like a magic door....
21	Paul	Yeah,* And it's (<i>indistinguishable</i>) Let's go for that!
22	Jessica	And they escaped and they ran all they way down the hill
23	Paul	And the witch was chasing them on her broomstick.
24	Jessica	Weeh! Yeah. (<i>They both laugh.</i>)
25		(<i>David returns</i>)
26	Jessica	Well....can I tell you something. There's a kind of witch in the house. The witch's got them in the house and she tried to just turn the dog into dog pie, the children into children soup and the cat into cat desert, but they couldn't and they escaped through this magic door}.
27	Paul	Door}
28	Jessica	and they ran all the way down the hill and that's the part that we got to.
29	David	Why don't they, like, get caught by the witch and but then they struggle free?
30	Paul	Yeah}
31	Jessica	Yeah}, but that's kind of ... going ... but that's kind of going home.
32	Paul	Shall we make it ...}

33	David	Mm. I don't think so} They could keep on running till they get to the house and the she goes 'Aww, I cant get them in there', then she, like, magics herself into ...
34	Paul	a bee... }
35	Jessica	Their mother} (<i>Laughter</i>). What if she turns herself into their mother and try and trick them. David, what about if she turns into their mother
36	David	Go!
37	Jessica	and is like 'go back to the house that you went to'.
38	David	But how would their mum know?
39	Jessica	She would ask them first what happened and then tell them to go back to the house and...
40	David	And then the witch transforms into a buzzard...
41	Jessica	But wait, that's a witch.
42	David	but what if...'cos she might not get there in time.
43	Jessica	But her broomstick, 'cos she didn't go as fast as she did before. What do you think, Paul? Do you think that she ...}
44	David	What do you think? Do you think she should turn } into an osprey or something like that?
45	Jessica	Or do you think that...}
46	Paul	Depends.... if a peregrine falcon's} the fastest bird in the world
47	David	Yeah. Peregrineor Emu?
48	Jessica	What's a peregrine? And what's an emu?
49	David	A peregrine falcon? It's the fastest bird in the world and it's one of the biggest birds of prey.
50	Jessica	OK so she turns into that }
51	David	Or* ... either an emu} 'cos they actually run quite fast.
52	Jessica	I don't think she should turn into an emu.
53	David	They're birds. They're big fat...they're not fat...I cant say they're fat,}
54	Jessica	I mean, but}
55	David	but they're fluffy.
56	Jessica	But they don't fly
57	David	They don't fly but they run fast that's the thing
58	Paul	But if she turns into the thing.}
59	Jessica	Yes}
60	Paul	Emus wouldn't....that isn't an emu's habitat so...
61	David	It's not a peregrine falcon's habitat either
62	Paul	It is.
63	David	No, they live in fields and wee fieldy bits, things like that.
64	Paul	They live in cliffs and hills.
65	David	But that hill.... But, what is that hill? We don't know what that hill is like.}
66	Jessica	But , David}Overlap
67	Paul	We can make it up cos there's rocks there Overlap
68	Jessica	David, say it turns not into an emu but (<i>mimes</i>)
69	David	The fastest bird in the world. A peregrine falcon and then she

		goes arrg! But she's even faster than one. We can make it like she's even faster and she flies after them.
70	Paul	Yeah she flies after them and gets to the house before them.
71	David	Then they open the door. And they all get behind the door and then they jump out on her.
72	Paul	And they jump out on her.
73	David	and the witch could go arrrg! and jump out on them and grab them and put them in a cage.
74	Paul	Like, grab them and put them in a cage.
75	David	Except the dog and the cat
76	Paul	They can go in a teeny cage
77	David	No
78	Jessica	In a different cage}
79	David	She could put the dog in a kennel which is guarded with security, with machine guns and lasers.
80	Jessica	That wouldn't fit in
81	David	Alright a pokey wee jail ...
82	Paul	A kennel with bars on the front.
83	Jessica	Yeah but what about the cat?
84	David	The cat can go in a box. You know how cats sleep in those big bed thingees? Well it could be a bed with a big roof over it that's completely sealed on so it can get out. Like a bird cage.

Appendix D Discussion of *Door in the Hill* Sources

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	AMcS	I wonder if the person who made up that story that I just told got the idea from the game or the game got the
2	Angus	That game wasn't out for ages, it's new.
3	AMcS	Yeah. You think we get ideas for stories from games and other stories and things like that.
4	David	Yeah, games.
5	AMcS	See your story about the door in the hill, are there any ideas in that that you maybe got from somewhere else?
6	David	I got the witch jumping out of the door from a book.
7	AMcS	You got that from a book?
8	David	Uh huh. And ...me and Paul got the peregrine falcon from a book, didn't we.
9	AMcS	Right.
10	David	I got her transforming into her mum from the transformers.
11	AMcS	Right. And remember I asked you before about the bit with all the animals running about everywhere. It reminded me of the song in the movie 'Enchanted' where all the animals were running about and singing. Maybe it's like other Disney movies too.
12	Jessica	Yeah, it was like that.
13	David	Yeah.

Appendix E *The Door in the Hill* (the 'bare bones' of the story, discussed with children and scribed by AMcS)

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Main Idea
1	Mum said 'Take dog for a walk.'
2	Up hill – found door
3	Opened door – witch
4	Ran out of door, chased by witch
5	Witch transformed into mum
6	Told them to go back up hill
7	Witch transformed into peregrine falcon
8	Back to the door in the rock
9	Witch – as witch - jumped out
10	Kids in cage, cat in carrying case, dog in kennel with bars
11	Knife could cut metal, cut bars
12	Witch into cauldron
13	Chocolate
14	Michael ate a bit
15	Ran home, mum lying in bed

Appendix F *The Door in the Hill* (the 'bare bones' of the story) with Propp's Functions of Dramatis Personae added

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Main Ideas
1	Mum said 'Take dog for a walk.' - I
2	Up hill – found door – XI, XXIII
3	Opened door – witch – XXVIII
4	Ran out of magic door – XV, IX
5	Chased by witch –IV, XXI
6	Witch transformed into mum –V, VI
7	Told them to go back up hill –II, VII
8	Witch transformed into peregrine falcon – VI
9	Back to the door in the rock
10	Witch – as witch - jumped out – XXVIII
11	Kids in cage, cat in carrying case, dog in kennel with bars – VIII, XII,
12	Knife could cut metal, cut bars – IX, X, XII, XIV, XXII, XXV,
13	Witch into cauldron – XVI, XXX
14	Chocolate - XVIII
15	Michael ate a bit – XIII
16	Ran home – XX
17	Mum lying in bed- XIX

Appendix G *The Snake in the Box*

Storytelling club, Dale School

Jason and Jessica

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	Jason	They found a snake in the box and the snake jumped out and
2		<i>(Long pause) (negotiation over turn taking)</i>
3	Jessica	The snake went to the door and (.....) but then it turned out to be a nice snake.
4	Jason	Then the snake jumped out the window <i>(laughs)</i> ... and ran away.
5	Jessica	Slithered away.
6	AMcS	Right, and is that the end of the story? Thank you very much. Give them a clap.

Appendix H *The Light Sabre in the Box*

Storytelling club, Dale School

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	AMcS	So it's going to be very short and you're sharing the story between you.
2	David	Well, they open the box and there is a light-sabre, which is a sword technically which is light but it can cut through anything and a chicken head cos ... emm .. A terrorist lived in the house and there was these police that were looking for them. And they bashed into the house and said *hands up*... to the wee boy and girl, but we don't know what their names are so we're just going to call them boy and girl And so they said hands up and they put their hands up (.....) and the police said hands up then (.....) the boy And he shot with his gun, but it missed and it bounced into the cooking pot that was in the open oven (.....)
3	Kelly	And this man was the person who had the chicken head and the light sabre and the sword. And the light saver
4	David	Sabre.
5	Kelly	And this old woman turned into a wizard ...
6	David	Wasn't it a giant wizard?
7	AMcS	Could you let Kelly tell her part of the story because we were all quiet for you.
8	Kelly	A <i>giant</i> wizard, and said get on my back and I'll take you home. And they didn't know it was their Grandma.

Appendix I The Last Noonoo

P5-7 class, Hillside School

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	John, Katy and Sharon	(<i>singing</i>) Noonoo! Noonoo! Noonoo!
2	John	Once upon a time there was a little boy called Marlon*...
3	John	That's me.
4	John	Who lived in a *big house* with his mum and his gran.
5	Katy	I'm the gran
6	Sharon	I'm ... No, I'm the mum
7	John	And Marlon loved his noonnoos*. Does anyone know what noonnoos are? (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
8	Audience response	Monsters?
9	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
10	Audience response	(<i>indistinguishable</i>)
11	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
12	Audience response	(<i>indistinguishable</i>)
13	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
14	Audience response	(<i>indistinguishable</i>)
15	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
16	Audience response	Dummies?
17	John	Yes. He loved his dummies*. And *every year since he was five* his mum and dad said...(look from Katy) ... his gran said ...
18	Katy	You've to get rid of those noonnoos once and for all.
19	All three	No! No! No!
20	John	And then when he was seven*.
21	All three	No! No! No! No!
22	John	And then when he was eight*.
23	All three plus audience	No! No! No!
24	John	Nine.
25	All three plus audience	No! No! No!
26	John	*And finally when he was 10, his mum and his gran decided to get all his noonnoos and throw them away*. So, first they looked in the.... where did they look? (<i>Katy and Sharon mime looking</i>) (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
27	Audience response	In the cupboard?
28	John	In the cupboard and they found two* noonnoos. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
29	Audience response	They looked in the sock drawers?

30	John	They looked in the sock drawer and they found seven* noonnoos. Where did they look next (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
31	Audience response	Under his bed?
32	John	Under the bed, they found one* noonnoo. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
33	Audience response	Under his pillow?
34	John	They found one noonnoo there as well.
35	Audience response	In his T-shirt cupboard?
36	John	They looked in the t-shirt cupboard and they didn't find any in there.
37	Audience response	In the fridge?
38	John	Nope, none in there either.
39	Audience response	Pants drawer?
40	John	They looked in his pants* drawer and they found three* in there. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
41	Audience response	The freezer?
42	John	They looked in the freezer and they didn't find any*.
43	John	So, soon they realised they'd found all* the noonnoos ... or so they thought. The only one they didn't* find was the one Marlon* kept in his toy box, which was his favourite* noonnoo. It was *bright fluorescent pink*.
44		(<i>laughter</i>)
45	John	Then one day he went out to the park, but*... *two bullies* were waiting for him, and they always made fun of him because of his noonnoos and they said things like *'Ha Ha you're too old for a noonnoo'.* (<i>Katy and Sharon mime bullies.</i>) (<i>laughter</i>)
46	John	So then* that night, the two bullies made *The Noonnoo Snatcher*.
47	All three plus audience gradually joining in	Ooooooh!*
48	John	And then ... So, they went home and the next morning... *Marlon went to the park again*, but ... *they stole his favourite noonnoo*. (<i>laughter</i>)
49	John	Then he went home and went to play outside in his garden, on the trampoline and he looked in his Welly boot and what did he find?
50	Audience response – (several children)	A noonnoo!*
51	John	So he went outside and he sat on the bench and he thought. And then he said 'I'm too old for noonnoos'. Then he had a tremendous* idea. Can anyone think

		what it is? (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
52	Audience response	Make a paper noonoo?
53		(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)? (<i>indistinguishable</i>)
54	John	What?* (<i>laughter</i>)
55	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
56	Audience response	Burn all his noonnoos that his mum and gran hadn't got?
57	John	(<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
58	Audience response	Blow it up with the dynamite?
59	John	What he did decide to do was ... I'm going to bury it in the garden to keep it safe.
60	John	So then ... he buried it in the garden and went out the next morning and saw the most spectacular thing he had ever seen. (<i>Asks named audience members</i>)?
61	Audience response	An Xbox 360? (<i>Laughter</i>)
62	John	Cool
63	Audience response	Noonnoos were growing out of the ground?
64	John	Nope, it's almost right.
65	Audience response	A noonoo tree?
66	John	Yes. He'd grown ... a *noonoo tree*
67	John	And then Marlon opened his own business, became a successful businessman and moved to Miami. He sold all the noonnoos. The end.

Propp's functions of *dramatis personae* which can be identified in *The Last Noonoo*:

II	an interdiction is addressed to the hero
III	the interdiction is violated.
VIII	One member of the family either lacks something or desires to have something.
X	the seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction
XII	The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
XIV	The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
XXVI	The task is resolved.
XXXI	The hero is married and ascends the throne – or in this case becomes a successful businessman.

Appendix J The Apple

P5-7 class, Hillside School

	Speaker	Dialogue
1	AMcS	So we have Phillip, Scott and Keith ... Alright, are you ready to listen?
2	Phillip	Our story is called The Apple. Once upon a time in a land far, far away there was a large kingdom, owned by a sort of...low, stupid, and short and fat king. He was taking a walk in his royal gardens one day, when he spotted an apple on a tree. It looked like any normal apple but there was something about it that made the king want it. But when he tried to jump for it, he couldn't get to it, so he went and asked the queen what he should do and...
3	Scott	She said ... why don't you try climbing the tree?
4	Phillip	So the king tried to climb the tree, but he was too fat and unfit and so he didn't get more than 5 inches off the ground. So he went to ask his royal servants and...
5	Keith	They said ... why don't you stand on your horse?
6	Phillip	So the king tried to stand on his horse, but the horse wasn't amused and wouldn't let him. So the king finally decided to go and ask the people of the kingdom. And they came up with... What do you think they came up with...?
7	Audience response	Using a ladder
8	Scott	So the king tried to climb up his royal ladder, but under his weight the ladder snapped and he fell backwards. Any other...so the king asked some more villagers...?
9	Audience response	A trampoline?
10	Keith	So the king went to get a trampoline, but he went right through the trampoline because he was so fat. (Asks named audience members)
11	Audience response	He could get a ladder of metal and he could just climb over the tree.
12	Phillip	But, in the kingdom they didn't have metal ladders for some reason because they didn't like metal, so they only had wooden ones and the king was too heavy to use them. (Asks named audience members)
13	Audience response	They could cut down the tree?
14	Scott	So, the king tried to cut down the tree with an axe but the tree was far too thick and it blunted the axe. (Asks named audience members)
15	Audience response	Um... a big ladder, which they could lean against the tree and then reach for the apple.
16	Keith	But remember, the king already tried that and he was too heavy and so the ladder broke, so that wouldn't work.

		<i>(Asks named audience member)</i>
17	Audience response	He could get one of the village kids to go up because they would be light enough to go up the ladder.
18	Phillip	Well, so the king asked the village kids if they would do it, but the village kids didn't like the king because they thought he was pompous and annoying and he never paid enough of the ... salaries for their parents working. So they didn't like the king so they disagreed and didn't do it. Anyone else who hasn't had a go yet? <i>(Asks named audience members)</i>
19	Audience response	They blew the tree up?
20	Scott	So the king went to his royal pile of dynamite and stuck a stick of it into a hollow part of the tree and lit it, but there was obviously some kind of squirrel in the tree, who pushed it out and the king was blown up.
21	Audience response	They could get an axe and make little steps in the tree.
22	Keith	So the king tried to do that, but the tree just blunted the axe again. He couldn't even make a scratch on it. <i>(Asks named audience members)</i>
23	Audience response	Threw an axe and try to cut the branch?
24	Phillip	So the king chucked an axe and tried ... and it hit the branch, but it bounced back and came flying back at him, like a boomerang and hit him in the head.
25	Scott	So the princess came out of the castle and went up to the tree and kissed it and the tree turned into... a tree full of golden apples with plenty for everyone.

Propp's functions of dramatis personae which can be identified in The Apple

I	One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
VIII	One member of the family either lacks something or desires to have something.
IX	The misfortune or lack is made known.
X	The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
XIII	The hero (the princess) reacts to the actions of the future donor.
XIV	The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
XIX	The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.
XXVI	The task is resolved.

Appendix N Table of Data
(with notes)

Ref	Location	Date	Description	Type of data	Notes
D1	N/A	April – May 2007	Reflection on target classes at Dale	Research journal	As supply teacher, I had taught P3 class twice, P4 class four times. Both classes had enjoyed a session of oral storytelling involving audience participation and a small amount of class discussion. I discussed research with head teacher, who was supportive to the idea of a storytelling club.
D2	Dale	10.10.07	Interview schedule for D3	Word file	Schedule of semi-structured interview – 6 questions plus 3 back-up questions. See appendix K
D3	Dale	12.10.07	Interview with head teacher	Audio	He was supportive of oral storytelling, seeing it as a stimulus to reading for enjoyment. He indicated that the school served an area where there was some economic hardship.
D4	N/A	22.10.07	Letters to parents and pupils	Word file	Explained purpose of research, confidentiality, right to withdraw at any point in suitable language for parents and for children. See Appendix L
D5	Dale	26.10.07	Reflection on sessions to introduce storytelling club to 2 classes	Research Journal	I told stories to each class, explained purposes of research, to ensure that I would have their informed consent, asked them to apply for the after-school storytelling club. Discussion with class. They needed a lot of prompting, but gave Thumbs up to 'the way I told the stories', the actions, repetition, joining in, the funny bits. I compared responses of these children with P4 children in my 2005 study and thought that it might be difficult for them to reflect on and evaluate stories.
D6	Dale	31.10.07	Completed permission forms and applications from children	Paper	Some children had drawn pictures - one of me telling a story with an open book beside me. See Appendix M
D7	Dale	2.11.07	Notes of discussions with class teachers	Research Journal	These children were working towards either Level A or Level B of 5-14 Guidelines on writing. Typical written stories from these children would range from a few linked sentences to a page of

					<p>writing with some recognisable structure. Their reading skills were limited to reading aloud and literal comprehension. Kelly and to a lesser extent Jessica, were seen by the P4 class teacher as having difficulties with literacy.</p> <p>The class teachers said the children had a little experience of collaborative work in class.</p> <p>P4 teacher commented 'They're nice children. They'll sit for you.' It seemed that I had not made it clear that I wanted children to be actively involved, not just sit and listen to stories.</p> <p>Getting to know the children – 5 boys (3 P4, 2 P3) and 1 girl (Jessica, P4)</p>
D8	Date	13.11.07	Storytelling club session 1	audio	
D9	Date	13.11.07	Storytelling club session 1	Research Journal	<p>I told the traditional tale <i>The Fairy at the Bottom of the Well</i>. Children used 'Thumbs up' feedback to show they enjoyed it. Two children talked about listening to stories at home. Fraser (P3) had brought his own written story to share. It needed an ending so children were asked to work out ending in pairs, sharing the telling between them. In paired discussion, David (P4) talked non-stop and his partner (Paul, P4) said almost nothing. In story performance, the children spoke 2 or 3 sentences and talked with their partner rather than to the audience.</p> <p>We talked about ground rules for talking and listening. Children said, 'You should listen to other people.'</p> <p>Game – I know a story – they found it difficult to name stories – only 9 titles.</p> <p>Children wanted to listen to more stories so I told traditional tale <i>Princess Marigold</i>.</p> <p>Jessica said she wished there were more girls in the club. Parents collected children and chatted about storytelling. Paul's mother said she hoped that storytelling would give him confidence. Angus' mother made similar comments.</p>
D10	Date	20.11.07	Storytelling club session 2	audio	Whole group story-making
D11	Date	20.11.07	Storytelling club session 2	transcript	Whole group-story-making - David and Paul contributed ideas.

D12	Dale	20.11.07	Storytelling club session 2	Research Journal	<p>4 children present.</p> <p>David dominated the whole group story-making. I felt that the children's difficulties in undertaking collaborative group work made it difficult for them to create collaborative stories. I introduced the idea of ground rules for talking and listening.</p> <p>Paul's speech was hesitant in whole-group story-making. He and David contributed ideas about birds of prey to the story.</p> <p>Later, Paul said he was not confident about telling stories.</p> <p>I told traditional story, <i>Turtle of Koka</i>. I asked, What was this story about? What was the point of it? but children did not understand the question and gave details from the story. We then talked about what they liked about the story and about my telling. Children said they liked the joining in and the ending.</p> <p>They commented on my voice and actions.</p> <p>Children then retold story in pairs. Jessica said she wished she didn't have to work with a boy. The boys said that they thought Jessica was good at storytelling and wanted to work with her.</p> <p>David and Jason giggled a lot in discussion. In telling, David spoke very quickly and rather incoherently in a monotone.</p> <p>In discussion Jessica was calm and quiet. This seemed to help Paul to settle to the task. Jessica told, Paul mimed. Jessica used gestures and inflection copied from my own performance.</p> <p>Paul looked at Jessica and seemed to copy these gestures in his mime.</p> <p>Saying what was good about each other's performance was not easy for the children, but they were willing to agree with me when I made comments.</p> <p>We discussed what makes a good story. I put forward quite a lot of suggestions. Children agreed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the beginning make me want to hear more?• Was I interested in what happened next?• Was there a good ending?• Would I like to hear/tell this story again? <p>After session David's mother spoke about her own love of</p>
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					stories and about David needing to learn to listen to others.
D13	Dale	27.11.07	Storytelling club session 3	audio	Tell a story round a circle
D14	Dale	27.11.07	Storytelling club session 3	transcript	Tell a story round a circle.
D15		27.11.07	Storytelling club session 3	Research Journal and children's post-it notes	8 children. Kelly – first time at club. I told <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> , emphasising the active role of Gretel. I pointed out to the children that I had used changes in my voice in telling and we tried to identify these. Post-it activity – stories we know - children contributed 31 story titles – big change from session 1 I chose 2, <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> and <i>Star Wars</i> and asked if children could sort the stories into 2 sets. They did this, naming the sets as Stories in Books and Stories they had Heard (mostly from me). Activity - Tell a story round a circle. Jason introduced the word pig and giggled a lot. On his next turn he again used the word pig and giggled. Kelly's contributions were very brief. We retold this story to aid memory and recall. I told traditional story <i>Daft Jack</i> . Children were very enthusiastic. We discussed what makes a good story and the children were able (with support) to arrive at criteria that made sense to them. Talked about what they wanted to do in the next sessions. Listening to stories was favourite for all children. Jessica wanted to tell stories on her own.
D16	Dale	8.1.08	Storytelling club session 4	audio	Collaborative stories
D17	Dale	8.1.08	Storytelling club session 4	transcript	Collaborative stories
D18	Dale	8.1.08	Storytelling club session 4	Research Journal	6 children Activity – choosing one word to describe imaginary box, saying that word to convey feeling about the box. Story stimulus – story starter about finding a box. Children were asked to continue the story in pairs. Jessica and Kelly wanted to work together but I had already asked them to work with the boys.

					<p>The <i>Snake in the Box</i> (Jessica and Jason)</p> <p>The <i>Light Sabre in the Box</i> (David and Kelly)</p> <p>Collaborative discussion did not seem to go well. Jessica seemed to be trying to help Jason to focus on the story-making while he laughed persistently about the idea of a snake being in the box.</p> <p>David explained to Kelly when she didn't know what a light sabre was. Kelly did not look at David when telling their story. Jessica, complained about difficulties in turn-taking. My solution was a 'special object' to show whose turn it was. We discussed ground rules for talking and listening. The children's ground rules were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look at the person who is speaking• Listen to the person who is speaking• Take turns
D19	Dale	15.1.08	Storytelling club session 5	audio	Re-telling <i>Daft Jack</i> story
D20	Dale	15.1.08	Storytelling club session 5	transcript	Re-telling <i>Daft Jack</i> story
D21	Dale	15.1.08	Storytelling club session 5	Research Journal	5 children
					Angus was unable to come because of a family commitment and Jason's parents had emailed to say he didn't want to come when there were no other P3 children at the club.
					I re-told and we discussed <i>Daft Jack</i> story. The children said they liked the ending. We discussed endings of stories and how they made us feel. The children were now more skilled in saying what they liked/what was good about a story performance, mentioning 'voice going up and down' 'slow bits and fast bits'. They could also comment simply on how to improve their discussions (e.g. We could have listened to each other better.)
					Children re-told <i>Daft Jack</i> story as a whole group activity, using 'special object' to help turn-taking. They found it difficult to remember, even though they had now heard it twice.
					We told personal stories and talked about the endings and how they made the audience feel.

					Children drew up ground rules for audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the person who is speaking Listen to the person who is speaking Don't interrupt
D22	Dale	22.1.08	Storytelling club session 6	audio	Discussion – identifying 'bare bones' of animal stories
D23	Dale	22.1.08	Storytelling club session 6	transcript	Discussion – identifying 'bare bones' of animal stories
D24	Dale	22.1.08	Storytelling club session 6	Research Journal	I told animal fables We talked about the morals of the stories and children were able to recognise possible morals from alternatives offered, even to suggest their own. This was progress from session 2. Activity – using different voices for different animals. Developing memory – using 'bare bones technique' David found it difficult to identify the bare bones of the story. Retelling animal stories Children remembered them using this scaffolding and retold the stories with variations of their own.. I told <i>Tam Linn</i> - children enjoyed Jade said 'I really enjoyed that others agreed.' We talked about eye contact, use of voice and gesture.
D25	Dale	29.1.08	Storytelling club session 7	audio	<i>Door in the Hill</i> discussion
D26	Dale	29.1.08	Storytelling club session 7	transcript	<i>Door in the Hill</i> performance
D27	Dale	29.1.08	Storytelling club session 7	video	<i>Door in the Hill</i> discussion <i>Door in the Hill</i> performance <i>Door in the Hill</i> discussion (part)
D28	Dale	29.1.08	Storytelling club session 7	Research Journal	Turn-taking, listening to each other, looking at each other, excitement and engagement with the task. At this club session there were only three children present. These were the Primary 4 children Jessica, David and Paul, all aged 8, working with others of similar age, stage and experience of oral storytelling. I told the beginning of a story about three children who went for a walk only to find what looked like a door in the hillside. Children discussed what might happen next and created a collaborative story from this

					beginning. <i>The Door in the Hill</i> was considered a very successful story by the children's own criteria, agreed in session 3. Individual improvements in skills were commented on by the children: Paul's confident speaking, David's listening to others: Jessica's contribution of 'good ideas' to discussion. Performance showed use of voice and facial expressions. Children looked at me (their only audience) and performed for me with enthusiasm.
D29	Dale	19.2.08	Storytelling club session 8	Audio	Most of session – 1 hr 10 mins
D30	Dale	19.2.08	Storytelling club session 8	transcript	Retelling animal stories
D31	Dale	19.2.08	Storytelling club session 8	Research Journal	3 children (Jessica, Paul, Angus) Preparing for performance: Enormous Turnip, Princess Marigold (David was absent)
D32	Dale	26.2.08	Storytelling club session 9	audio	Time?
D33	Dale	26.2.08	Storytelling club session 9	transcript	Discussion of sources of Door in the Hill Performance of Door in the Hill.
D34	Dale	26.2.08	Storytelling club session 9	Research Journal	4 children Preparing for performance <i>Door in the Hill</i> – the children suggested (and I agreed) that this was the most successful story created and told in the club. They discussed sources of ideas for this story. The used bare bone agreed in session seven to help prepare for the retelling, but forgot a section of the story until reminded by me.
D35	Dale	11.3.08	Performance for family and friends	Research Journal	<i>The Door in the Hill</i> – collaborative story, much appreciated by the audience. Jessica, Paul and David divided the story between them, as in Appendix A. The other two children mimed as one child told the section of the story. <i>The Enormous Turnip</i> - mime and participation from children to my telling of traditional story <i>Princess Marigold</i> - mime and participation from children to my telling of traditional story <i>Town mouse, country mouse</i> – collaborative retelling of

					<p>traditional story <i>The Dog and the Bone</i> - collaborative retelling of traditional story <i>The Fox and the Cockerel</i> – individual retelling of traditional story (Jessica) <i>The Eagle and the Wren</i> – individual retelling of traditional story (David)</p>
D36	Dale	21.3.08	Performance at school assemblies and for nursery class	Research Journal	Children were reluctant to perform in front of other classes but agreed to tell <i>The Door in the Hill</i> and to join with me in participating in the telling of the traditional stories <i>The Enormous Turnip</i> and <i>Princess Marigold</i> .
X1	N/A	July 08	All five stories matched to Propp's functions of dramatis personae	Word file	Appendix F
H1	Hillside	14.3.08	Thoughts on selection of Hillside School for collection of data. Discussion with head teacher Introductory talk for classes	Research Journal	<p>I had taught the P5-7 class for 5 weeks and considered that additional data from this context would provide useful contrasts with Dale school data and shed light on research questions. I felt that, through what they brought to the school and through the activities offered to them in school, these children demonstrated an understanding of written narrative. Typical written stories from these children would consist of several pages of well-structured narrative. I knew from working as a supply teacher in the school that the children were comfortable with collaborative working and that they understood the concept of ground rules, as I had asked them to consider their ground rules for talking and listening.</p> <p>They also possessed performance skills. The children had experience of communicating with an audience of younger children in assemblies and drama and I had previously worked with them on ways to involve their audience in assembly presentations. The head teacher was happy for me to undertake storytelling sessions during school time for the purposes of this research. She considered that children would benefit from storytelling activities in developing literacy skills</p>

					<p>and confidence. She indicated that the P5-7 children were working towards 5-14 Level D, E or F in writing and that in reading they were able to go beyond the literal comprehension and draw inferences from the text. The head teacher said the school served a mainly middle class catchment area. Brief introductory talk to children explained purposes of the research, dissemination of findings, how they would be involved. Children were asked to give their permission if they were happy with this. Confidentiality and anonymity were explained, as was the right to withdraw consent at any time. Discussion was invited and children asked pertinent questions, suggesting that they had some understanding of the issues.</p>
H2	Hillside	.April 08	Letter to parents and children at Hillside School.	Word file	<p>Explained purpose of research, anonymity, confidentiality, right to withdraw at any point in suitable language for parents and for children.</p>
H3	Hillside	May08	Completed permission forms and applications from children	Paper	.
H4	Hillside	19.5.08	P5-7 class session 1	audio	Whole session (90 minutes)
H5	Hillside	19.5.08	P5-7 class session 1	transcript	Ground rules
H6	Hillside	19.5.08	P5-7 class session 1	Research Journal	<p>I explained that we were going to have two storytelling sessions and that they would then tell stories to the P1-2 class. Everyone thought this would be a good thing to do.</p> <p>I told the traditional tale, <i>Turtle of Koka</i>. Children recalled ground rules for talking and listening and created ground rules for talking to an audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk clearly• Make sure everyone can hear• Be enthusiastic• Try to use different pitches in your voice• Use different voices for different people or animals• Know what you are talking about• Don't be boring• Be confident

					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make eye contact with your audience and for listening as an audience:• Don't fidget• Don't interrupt• At least pretend that you're enjoying the story• Pay attention• Look at the teller <p>They had no difficulty in identifying the theme of the story and all enjoyed the humour. I asked them to work together in groups to retell the story.</p> <p>They considered how well they had worked as a team. The class named stories they knew for five minutes and could have continued.</p> <p>I told <i>Tsunami</i> and they were able to engage in a fairly sophisticated discussion about the storyteller imagining what it was like to be 'in the story' and simultaneously thinking ahead to what might happen next.</p> <p>Children agreed on criteria for a successful story. These were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stories should have a recognisable structure of beginning, middle and end• stories should create a problem which has to be resolved
H7	Hillside	13.6.08	P5-7 class session 2	audio	Whole session (90 minutes)
H8	Hillside	13.6.08	P5-7 class session 2	transcript	Feedback from pupils on each others' story performances
H9	Hillside	13.6.08	P5-7 class session 2	Research Journal	<p>I told the traditional tale Gecko. Children discussed the moral of the story and offered suggestions for other stories on a similar theme.</p> <p>We discussed audience participation. I challenged the children to create their own collaborative story involving audience participation. They were all able to do this successfully. <i>The Apple</i>, told by Keith (P5, aged 9), Philip (P6, aged 10) and</p>

				<p>Scott (P6, aged 11) told of a king who saw and wanted an unusual apple, then tried unsuccessfully to get the apple for himself. The climax of the story was when the princess kissed the tree and the tree offered apples to everyone who wanted them. <i>The Last Noonoo</i> was told by Sharon, (P7, aged 11, John and Katy (both P7, aged 12). In this story, which was strongly based on Jill Murphy's picture book of the same title, Marlon was asked to get rid of his dummies (noonnoos). He managed to keep what he believed to be the last one, only to have it stolen by bullies. He found one remaining dummy, buried it in the ground and next morning it had grown into a 'noonnoo tree'. Marlon made his fortune by selling the dummies from the tree.</p> <p>Children worked on their stories and performed them for the class. There was some evaluation of these stories and brief discussion of sources of ideas for them, for example, the influence of an anti-bullying theatrical performance was recognised in <i>The Last Noonoo</i>. Interestingly, no-one commented that this story was based on Jill Murphy's picturebook.</p> <p>There were some problems with making use of audience participation and these were discussed as a class.</p> <p>In class discussion John had to be reminded to let others have a chance to express their opinions and he seemed to dominate the story-making discussion with Sharon and Katy. Feedback from the class highlighted this unequal sharing of the telling. John's storytelling skills were praised by other class members and I personally thought (but didn't say to the children) that his performance skills were outstanding.</p> <p>Scott, Phillip and Keith listened to each other and their discussion did not seem to be dominated by any of the three. Children added their third criterion for a successful story, which was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stories should involve audience participation.
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H10	Hillside	18.6.08	P3-4 class session 1	audio	Whole session (1 hour)
H11	Hillside	18.6.08	P3-4 class session 1	transcript	2 collaborative stories
H12	Hillside	18.6.08	P3-4 class session 1	Research Journal	This class of children were all able to create and discuss collaborative stories with greater ease than the Dale children at the same stages. They produced stories that were longer, more complex and had a more clearly defined structure than those of the children in early sessions of the Dale School storytelling club
H13	Hillside	24.6.08	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	audio	Whole session (90 minutes)
H14	Hillside	24.6.08	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	transcript	The story performances
H15	Hillside	24.6.08	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	video	Filmed by children from P5-7 class
H16	Hillside	24.6.08	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	photos	Taken by children from P5-7 class
H17	Hillside	24.6.08	Preparation for and performance by P5-7 for P1-2	Research Journal	Children had no difficulty in recalling their own and other group's stories from the previous session and they commented favourably on improvements that had been made. Performances were all judged to be successful by the children's own criteria. Performances were much enjoyed by P1-2 children.